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**THE INNER LIFE SERIES**

**HEALTH AND THE INNER LIFE**





# HEALTH AND THE INNER LIFE

AN ANALYTICAL AND HISTORICAL STUDY OF SPIRITUAL  
HEALING THEORIES, WITH AN ACCOUNT OF THE  
LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF P. P. QUIMBY

BY

HORATIO W. DRESSER

Author of "The Power of Silence," "Man and the Divine  
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# HEALTH AND THE INNER LIFE

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## INTRODUCTION

**T**HERE are three general points of view from which one may regard the mental life of man in its relation to the body. In the first place, the mind may be regarded from below, as if it were a mere product of matter. From this point of view, every event in man's mental history is a result of physical processes; every thought, feeling, or volition springs from, and is dependent upon certain conditions of the brain. What is called "consciousness" is a product or accompaniment of bodily life; matter alone is ultimately real; mind has no significance apart from it. The "soul" is an invention of human thought, devised to account for the higher phases of cerebral productivity. This is the point of view of typical old-time materialism.

From the second point of view, mental states and bodily processes are regarded as if they existed on the same level. This may mean that physical events are taken to be merely parallel with psychic states, with no interchange. Or, it may imply belief in the interaction of mind and brain. Biologically

speaking, it involves a theory of mental development corresponding to physical evolution. Most scientific theories of the relationship of mind and matter belong under this head. In some respects it is also the point of view of popular thought.

In the third place, the observer is supposedly located within the mental life, looking out through "the windows of the soul" upon all the world. This position is not explicitly the point of view of any recognised school of thought, yet it is implied in many popular and unscientific beliefs. It is also the standpoint of those who maintain that the brain is merely the physical instrument of the soul. Such a position need not imply the complete independence or supremacy of the soul. But it may reasonably include the conviction that, on occasion, the soul is roused into masterful activity and is thereby enabled to initiate new lines of action. Many works of genius and occasional triumphs of the will seem to imply that the soul is superior, not merely as an observer of the bodily life going on below, but as an actual master of adverse conditions. Inspired by the study of such instances, contemporary theorists frequently point out that man is a soul with a body, not a body with a soul. It is even said that the soul is potentially master of every portion of bodily life, that in the long run the body becomes what the soul makes it.

Whatever one may think of the extravagant and other unscientific beliefs which belong under this head, it is clear that both for theoretical and for

practical purposes every one should be able to take up the position from which the body and the entire physical world are looked at from above. When we pause to think, we are compelled to admit the existence of consciousness as the primal and surest fact. What we know of the great world around is known through our states of consciousness, and if we seem to be living a merely objective life, amidst external things, it is because we have become oblivious of the real nature of experience. We live in the inner world of our own mental life, contemplate, reflect, and react upon events which, as known by us, are purely mental. Hence the burden of proof rests upon the materialist, not upon the idealist. If it requires thought to discover that we live fundamentally a mental life, the result of our analysis is the discovery that no point of view is more natural than that of the outward look from within.

It is one thing, however, to start with the fundamental fact of consciousness and arrive at idealistic conclusions about human experience as a whole, and another to regard the inner life as the centre of practical activity. The theoretical discipline is highly profitable. It is well to remind ourselves many times that in very truth we lead a conscious life. But as idealism in theory is not necessarily idealism in practice, a much severer discipline is needed before one is in a position to test the optimistic popular beliefs in regard to the supremacy of the soul. No one is ready to test these beliefs



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to the full who is unwilling to regard the soul as potentially a master. Now that materialism has had the fullest hearing, it is but fair that a distinctly spiritual point of view should have recognition. Most men have a half-dormant conviction that they have never accomplished what they might by mental power. Mere theory is of no avail in this connection: each man must investigate his mental world, experiment with his own mind. The chances are that every man will confess with shame that he even lacks the first requisite, namely, self-control.

A simple illustration will show the difference between the man who is at home in his mental world and the one who is without inner resources. Let it be a typical case of the approach of sudden illness, or simply the presence of a slightly painful sensation with which the mind unwittingly associates the name of a dreaded disease, with all its terrors. The man who has no staying power, no knowledge of his inner self, is swept forward by the consciousness of sensation, a description of which he communicates to a physician, who in turn is compelled to judge the case from the outside. By skilful questioning, many doctors are indeed able to work their way, as it were, well into the interior of a patient's life. Yet all this is relatively external. Even in cases of so-called mental disease the physician very naturally judges the mental states by their physiological conditions. Important as this judgment may be, there is still another story to be told.

On the other hand, let it be a case where the

person in question is in some measure aware of the resources of the inner life. External aid may or may not be necessary. The symptoms may or may not be alarming. But if there is a tendency towards emotional excitement and fear, with their bodily accompaniments, these tendencies are inhibited, met with calmness and self-control. The person in question may not be able to follow up the advantage and actively overcome the disease by mental methods. But many people know from experience what it is to inhibit the rising tide of emotion which so soon passes beyond control if not stopped at once. Let this suffice in a general way for an illustration of the third attitude towards our mental life.

It is clear that no theory of the inner life can long stand which ignores any of the facts involved in the three attitudes above described. There is no need of assertion of mental power, or denial of the reality of matter, if one possesses the facts. Yet as the most important facts are those of which we know least, there is need of searching investigation into the obscurer regions of the inner life, that we may be able to weigh the evidence for and against the most sharply contrasted points of view. It would be excusable if for a time no facts should be considered except those which indicate the supremacy of mind.

The purpose of this book is to bring these neglected considerations into view. By the term "inner life," as here used, is meant the mental experience of man in so far as it involves practical

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beliefs and active attitudes. The inner life is the series of psychic states which each of us discovers as a unique, individual possession. In its outer references, our inner life is related to the great world of things and persons. Within its own precincts, it involves references to the dimly conscious, the subconscious, to an underlying selfhood, and to ultimate reality, or Being. It is with the less-known phases of the inner life that we are to be concerned, and always the point of view will be that of the observer or participant, looking out upon life from within.

By the term "health" is meant not so much the bodily condition as the accompanying mental states. In the larger sense of the word, health means a sound mind in a sound body. This being so, it is necessary to study the problems of health and disease as affairs of the entire individual. But every one is supposed to understand the conditions of physical health, or at least to know where to obtain the necessary information; the real problem is to discover the hidden factors on the mental side of life. To become conscious of the inner life in its relation to health is to learn what manner of life one lives at large, then to discover the central sources of conduct in so far as conduct comes within the province of the will. The science of physical health may be acquired in a more general way. The science of mental health springs out of an art of life which each individual must acquire through far more intimate self-knowledge than the average man possesses.

Let us assume, then, that the reader has taken up the subjective position above characterised, and that he is prepared to test the teachings of this book by direct reference to experience. Mere theory is of so little consequence in our undertaking that scarcely a statement can be weighed apart from instances which exemplify the power of mind, together with the study of personal problems of health. It matters little how far the individual problem has been carried. The art of health is still an ideal for most of us. Numbers of people have reached the point where they clearly see that health is part and parcel of the art of life. The essential is to begin wherever each of us stands and consider how to take the next step. That no merely physical solution of the problem is possible is perfectly clear. But that the true mind cure demands wise thought for things of this life is no less plain. Whatever the conclusion, it is clear that the art of health is the art of common sense. Not even while one is bringing the hidden factors of mind to the fore is one called upon to neglect the wisdom of the past in regard to the conditions of physical existence. If one is to triumph over the ills of the flesh and the woes of the mind it must be by full acknowledgment of the actual facts of real life. The theorist who believes in affirming the supremacy of mind at all costs is likely to take slight interest in this book.

It is not necessary to begin a new series of experiments in order to have data for our present inquiry. The experiment has been in process for more than

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half a century, and actual life is more fruitful than artificial experiment. One can scarcely raise the question, how far the mind has power over the body, without a reminder that a mind-cure movement has existed for many years. It is hardly possible to discuss the question without first reckoning with that movement, for otherwise it will be assumed that one accepts all sorts of beliefs to which one takes the most decided exception. Moreover, there are particular reasons for prefacing the present inquiry with an historical introduction. The reasons will become apparent as we proceed.

Twenty-five years ago, when the mental-healing movement was first publicly discussed, it was lightly put aside as "the Boston craze," and an early death was prophesied for it. Consequently no attempt was made to sift the wheat from the chaff, no record was kept of instances of cure. Since that time, the movement has attained large proportions, and has repeatedly divided and subdivided. At one time there were three so-called international societies holding independent conventions for the discussion of mental-healing theories. More than one hundred publications have been issued for brief periods, sixty of which were in existence at one time. The output of books has run into the hundreds, and while the majority contain repetitions of a few ideas many have had a large sale. Little "centres of truth," independent churches, and metaphysical clubs have been established here and there throughout the English-speaking world. The practice of

mental healing has grown steadily, and both physicians and clergymen have felt the results of widespread adherence to mind-cure doctrines. The tendency has been to make a religion of the cult, to substitute it both for current forms of worship and for medical practice. Entirely aside from the hold which its most radical form has had upon the community, many people have now come to the conclusion that the general doctrine has come to stay and must be reckoned with.

Some of the claims of mental-healing devotees are enormously extravagant, and certain phases of the general movement are decidedly ephemeral. Has the time come when it is possible to estimate its more permanent phases, and evaluate the practice of mental therapists? There are reasons for believing that such an estimate is now possible. The output of publications reached its height about four years ago. New books on mental healing are published now and then, but they add little to the general doctrine. There is a tendency on the part of the public to assimilate the sounder notions and reject the specialisms. Hence it is easier to see what ideas and methods are likely to prove of permanent value.

In order to prepare the way for the assessment of existing mind-cure doctrines, it is important to reconsider the parent theory out of which the present-day beliefs were differentiated. The general doctrine was much simpler when it was first promulgated, and the first books on the subject are

among the best that have been written. Whatever the value of the general theory as originally set forth, it was given a direction which it has ever since followed, and to understand the present tendencies one must trace their history. Again, there is need of such a study because most of the writers have been inclined to ignore their own indebtedness. Usually when the history of the subject has been referred to, it has been in a controversial spirit. Hence the significance of the original discoveries has been overlooked.

As a contribution to the scientific investigation of the whole field, the present volume is intended to inform rather than to convert. With this aim in view, it has seemed best to reconstruct in one volume various articles and portions of earlier books, so that the original theory might be appreciated on its own merits. Hitherto there has been no book of this character, because most of the writing under this head has been didactic or dogmatic. Mental-healing writers as a rule take little interest in facts. As opposed to this general tendency, the mind-cure theory of the future will be reared on facts. If dispassionate inquiry shall some time take the place of exaggerated assertion, the future history of the doctrine will be strikingly in harmony with its pioneer stages.

Entirely aside from the possible values of present-day mind-cure theories, this volume is issued with the conviction that there is a phase of the general doctrine which has received little recognition, even

in this day of unprecedented interest in such therapeutic systems. Every one knows something about "Christian Science." Having heard about the malpractice which occurs in connection with that doctrine, and having condemned the whole theory as absurd, the tendency has been to classify allied doctrines under the same head. To broach any subject that resembles mind-cure theory is forthwith to be relegated to the domain of the unbalanced, and hence to be scornfully denied a hearing. It is easy to preach against the whole theory, as thus publicly scorned. On the other hand, it seems never to occur to the critics that there may be a theory which has little in common with the one which has been condemned. Many exposures of "Christian Science" have been published, but not one has gone to the root of the matter; hence every exposure has added fuel to the flames.

There would be two rational methods of exposing "Christian Science" and its offshoots. One plan would be to make a thorough study of the facts of mental-healing practice. In this way one might assimilate all that is therapeutically sound, although the religious and metaphysical aspects of the theory would require separate consideration. The other method would be to seek the facts in regard to the early discoveries of mental healing, examine the inferences drawn from those discoveries by the founder of "Christian Science," and select the sound from the unsound. For the best way to



understand an error is to discover its genesis. All this by way of suggestion to would-be destroyers of the doctrine.

We are reminded, however, by wise men like the late Professor Joseph Le Conte that "pure unmixed error does not live to trouble us long." The fact that the rational mind-cure theory has survived more than fifty years is proof that it contains truth. The fact that the earlier form of the doctrine is the one that has been clung to most persistently by the class of people who make no noise in the world should be no less significant. But even "Christian Science" has played its part in our time. Hundreds of the more rational mental-healing exponents began as devotees of that doctrine which, with all its extravagances, at least served to awaken them from "dogmatic slumbers."

From the point of view of the more rational mind-cure theory, nothing could have been more unfortunate, however, than the undue emphasis which has been put upon "Christian Science." The rational investigation which the whole subject demands has been kept back a score of years on account of it. Yet at any time during the last decade, to investigate would have been to discover that the mind-cure movement has come to stay, and to conclude that the best course to pursue is to search out the truth and cease to denounce the error. No remedy is so effectual as truth. A tithe of the energy which has been spent in denunciations would have served to bring out the vital truth.

The real fact to explain is not the "psychological moment," namely, the flocking of the multitude into "Christian Science" churches, but *the fact of mental cure*. If it were not for the cures which have somehow been wrought, the churches would never have been built. A spirit of genuine religion has also worked its way in. But the explanation of this fact belongs with the other. It is the peculiar connection of health with religion that constitutes the strangeness of the phenomenon. It is an interesting fact that the only person of great scholarly repute who has ever paid the mind-cure movement any serious attention seized upon its religious aspect as its practical essence.<sup>1</sup>

The peculiarity of a doctrine which thrives upon its practical characteristics is that it appeals at first only to those who have experienced its benefits. All the pioneers of the mental-healing movement were restored invalids, and all the leaders since the early days have been restored to health under mental treatment. The mental-healing belief has forthwith become a metaphysic and a religion, but the prime interest was therapeutic. It was by restoring himself to health that P. P. Quimby, the parent mental healer in this country, discovered the central principles of the whole doctrine. The first mental-healing author, W. F. Evans, was a patient of Mr. Quimby before he began to write upon the subject. The same is true of the author of *Science and Health*.

<sup>1</sup> See *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, by Prof. William James. New York, 1902.

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Whatever one's intent, then, whether it be to refute the error or to assimilate the truth, one should begin at the beginning, and endeavour to understand the theories which have meant so much to the pioneer devotees.

The present discussion is intended both for the scientific student and for the practical man. Those who wish to understand the mental-healing methods will be able to select the principles which appeal to them by following the historical development of the general doctrine. On the other hand, those who are inclined to expose the whole teaching may perhaps be able to discover the first flaw in Mr. Quimby's reasoning, by collecting and comparing the quotations from his manuscripts which appear here and there in this volume.

Those who read deeply will doubtless discover the truths which have caused the mind-cure movement to live. To study the original teachings is to be convinced that they sprang out of genuinely human experience. No one can judge the teachings fairly who judges by the letter alone. The early devotees were filled with zeal for practical truths; they were eager to help suffering humanity. They sometimes failed to say what they meant. But every one who reads sympathetically will see that their faith is susceptible of practical application, hence that the record of experience is often of more value than the theory which is brought forward to account for it.

As contrasted with later forms of mental-healing

theory, the tendency of the parent doctrine is to place emphasis upon understanding, rather than upon denial and affirmation. Mr. Quimby sought above all else to discover man's actual situation in life, then to see the wisdom of that situation. He made no attempt to deny the existence of the natural world, but sought its meaning in relation to the spiritual. Nor did he ignore the physical conditions of disease, well knowing that they are decidedly real to the person who is subject to them. His interest was to penetrate beneath the surface to the interior mental and spiritual causes. Any fact that might throw light on the inner conditions was to be welcomed. Hence the tendency of his thought was not to exclude but to analyse and to master, not to deny but to explain. Mr. Quimby was eager to follow the truth wherever it might lead, firm in the conviction that when discovered it would set man free. His own experience and insight had brought into view a more interior series of facts. On these he believed it possible to rear a truer science and art of life. It is this scientific interest, together with the profounder spiritual principles which it implies, which has been lost sight of during the reign of recent forms of mind-cure teaching. Were it not for this deeper interest many devotees of the movement would have had no connection with it. To approach the subject in this spirit is to put the whole teaching in a different light, to see that it is essentially rational, after all. At the same time one sees why the dozen or more

variations have developed from the original teaching by putting emphasis on certain favourite considerations.

There are a number of questions which occur to the mind when the mental-healing theory is brought forward in all seriousness. To inquire into the issues thus raised is to find the clue to the permanent interests which have made the mind cure possible. For example, the question arises, What is meant by saying that disease is largely of mental origin? How is it possible to alleviate or cure suffering by sitting silently beside a patient? How does it happen that the facts of mental cure lead the person who is restored to health to take profound interest in psychology and philosophy? Why is the mode of life changed? Why should one connect the healing of disease with religion?

It is with such questions that the present volume is concerned. The best result that can come to the reader will be the discovery that he is in the midst of a new investigation. Some of the earlier statements will be found of little permanent value. Their importance lies in the fact that they exhibit the clues which earnest souls have actually followed in the pursuit of truth. Hence the essential is the implied point of view. To realise even in some slight measure the significance of that point of view is to see that it has direct bearings upon everything that most intimately concerns the soul.

## CHAPTER I

### HISTORICAL SKETCH

FROM one point of view, the mind cure is as old as human belief. For if there is any efficacy in the objects with which superstition clothes itself, that power is found in man's belief in invisible agencies. Primitive beliefs were animistic. Man projected his own emotions and thoughts into the visible world. He sought to adjust his conduct so as to take advantage of supernatural powers. Very early there appeared a belief that disease could be cured by various occult practices. Works on anthropology, such as Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, abound in accounts of strange notions about sickness as supposedly caused by the partial maladjustment of the soul to the body, or to some other unusual mental condition, while peculiar beliefs about the efficacy of the mind are no less common. To this day, so the anthropologists assure us, there are savage peoples who believe that distant members of the tribe may be telepathically influenced. The principle that "like affects like" is common to both ancient and modern mind cure. For example, an act performed upon a certain part of the body is supposed by some savage peoples to produce a

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corresponding effect upon an absent individual. In some tribes it has been the custom for the wives of the distant warriors to gather round the fire at home and put themselves through the operations which their liege lords were supposed just then to be going through, and hence to aid them to conquer.

There is scarcely a tenet in the mind-cure faith of to-day that cannot be paralleled by a corresponding belief in ancient or savage times. In all ages and among various peoples there have been periods when belief in unusual powers have been prevalent. Many would set these down as outbreaks of credulity. Others would say that the race will be subject to such attacks until their law is understood, their meaning and truth assimilated. At any rate, these strange upheavals of all that is occult and weird are of peculiar interest to the mind-cure devotee, for they show that there has been a very general yearning after the knowledge which our age, at last, is likely to discover. Now that societies for psychical research exist, and scientific hypotheses concerning the subliminal region have been proposed, we are likely to assimilate the truth and discard the superstition. If our age has witnessed a more violent outbreak than the attacks of superstition which have visited other times, the meaning probably is that we now have the scientific weapons wherewith to meet it. In the future there will perhaps be no need of special sects for the promulgation of such beliefs, for there will be a science of all such phenomena.

In India, where science has not been distinguished from superstition as we would discriminate, the age of belief in unusual powers has been practically continuous. The literature of Buddhism is particularly rich in doctrines which the mind-cure devotee of to-day has restated. In the *Dhammapada*, Buddha gives utterance to a sentence which might well stand for the modern theory oddly denominated the "New Thought." Buddha says: "All that we are is the result of what we have thought; it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts." Every student of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* knows that these Hindoo sacred books abound in statements which are almost identical with recent mind-cure sayings. In the *Maitrayana Upanishad* it is said that "thoughts cause the round of a new birth and a new death. . . . What a man thinks, that he is: this is the old secret."<sup>1</sup>

In the least-known and speculatively less important *Atharva-Veda* there are suggestions and affirmations for the cure of disease which rival in minuteness and number any modern mind-cure scheme. There are special charms to cure fever, headache, cough, jaundice, colic, heart disease, paralysis, hereditary disease, leprosy, scrofula, ophthalmia, and dozens of other diseases. There are affirmations to overcome the effect of poison, to procure easy childbirth, to conquer jealousy, to control the kind of offspring, even to obtain a husband or secure a wife. The modern devotees of "claims" for

<sup>1</sup> vi., 34.



success have been anticipated by the authors of this *Veda*, who also point out how one may "attract" prosperity. Even the charm for obtaining long life is given. Again, the principle is recognised that people who have little faith must eke out their faith by the use of material means. Here, for instance, is a suggestion to be made when one partakes of spring water to aid in carrying off foreign matter from the body: "The spring water yonder which runs down upon the mountain, that do I render healing for thee, in order that thou mayest contain a potent remedy." It is clear that the ancient sages understood all the secrets of the mind cure. For untold ages the "New Thought" has been old in India.

Turning to Plato, one finds many hints that might be developed into mind-cure theory of the more rational type. Plato maintains that many of our ills and diseases are due to excess. He complains that certain kinds of medical practice tend to increase the number of diseases, and points out that people become invalids through failure to learn the lesson of their indiscretions. Temperance, moderation, balance, self-control, or order within—these are the remedies which Plato proposes. But for Plato no normal development of the soul is possible without the cultivation of the body. A sound mind in a beautiful body is his ideal. One who should take Plato's *Republic* for his practical guide might well dispense with most of the modern mental-healing theories.

Again, in the teachings of the Epicureans, the Stoics, and Sceptics, there are ideas and methods which remind one of current doctrines. The age of Greek practical philosophy was a period of belief in equanimity, inner peace, freedom from external disturbance. The first stress was put upon the inner life, and the philosopher practised what he taught by maintaining a wise attitude towards life. The relation of this attitude to bodily health apparently did not concern the philosopher of that day. Nevertheless, some of the essentials were known, and the benefits of the philosophic mode of life were experienced. It has remained for us to trace the connection between inner peace and bodily benefits.

Through the middle ages there were outcroppings of doctrines and practices which still more closely resemble recent teachings. Instances of remarkable healing were more common than in earlier periods. Some of the later idealistic philosophers came very near the application of their philosophy to health. Again, in Spinoza's *Ethics* there are suggestions of mind-cure doctrines. The lives of philosophers such as Kant afford considerable material for reflection to all who are interested in the connection between physical health and the inner life. Just previous to and contemporaneously with the first mind-cure investigations in America, interest in what was then called "mental hygiene" began to appear here and there, and a number of books were written on the subject. There are also some points of resemblance

between the later mind-cure teachings and the theories of *The Philosophy of Electrical Psychology*, by John Bovee Dods.<sup>1</sup>

When all has been said, however, it is beyond dispute that it remained for a man who knew almost nothing about the teachings of the past to make the investigations which in due course led to the development of what we now know as mental healing. Now that we possess the theory, it is of course easy to find confirmatory evidences all through the ages, and allied interests in the nineteenth century. It is but fair, however, to acknowledge the work which really made the mind-cure movement possible, and, if any credit is given, assign it to the one who really deserves it. The movement sprang, directly or indirectly, from the work of half a dozen persons, all of whom were healed by the pioneer mental therapist of America. Many have enjoyed the after-benefits who have never heard of this pioneer. But that does not alter the fact that in a peculiar way their beliefs are bound up with the history of the movement.

The history here narrated is not told for the sake of exalting a personality, but because the facts bear upon the teachings in question. In our time, it is well understood that theorist and theory are inseparable. If we would rightly understand a doctrine which has taken firm hold of the people we must know how it arose in the life of the one who propounded it. To insist that it

<sup>1</sup> New York, S. R. Wells, 1870.

came "by revelation" is nowadays no explanation. To put forth only such statements as chance to please their promulgator is to create an illusion which must some day be exposed. The well-informed know that every truth has had a long history. Truth and error are alike bound up with personal incidents which otherwise may be of slight consequence.

Few men have begun and carried on an investigation in a more humble and quiet way than Phineas Parkhurst Quimby, who was born in Lebanon, New Hampshire, February 16, 1802, and died in Belfast, Maine, January 16, 1866. When he was two years of age, his parents moved to Belfast, where he lived until his death, except during the busier years of his practice in Portland, Maine. His father was a blacksmith, and he was one of a family of seven children. On account of his father's scanty means, and because of the meagre educational opportunities at hand, his schooling was very limited. During his boyhood he attended the town school a part of the time, and there he acquired a knowledge of the rudimentary branches. His training was obtained for the most part, however, in the school of experience. He greatly regretted that his education had been so meagre, but the lack of it was plainly his misfortune and was not due to any defect on his part. In later years, when the desire came to familiarise himself with the philosophical teachings of the past, his life was too full to permit it. His son,

George A. Quimby, who is the authority for the facts here given,<sup>1</sup> says that

“he had a very inventive turn of mind, and was always interested in mechanics, philosophy, and scientific subjects. During his middle life he invented several devices, on which he obtained letters patent. He was very argumentative, and always wanted proof of anything rather than an accepted opinion. Anything that could be demonstrated he was ready to accept; but he would combat what could not be proved with all his energy rather than admit it as a truth.”

With a mind of this type, it was natural that when Charles Poyan, a Frenchman, introduced mesmerism into this country, about 1836, and later gave lectures and made experiments in Belfast, Mr. Quimby should become greatly interested. Here was a phenomenon that to him was entirely new and worthy of investigation. Accordingly he at once began to inquire into the subject, and whenever he found a person who was willing to be experimented upon he would try to induce the mesmeric sleep. He frequently failed, but now and then found some one whom he could influence.

“At that time Mr. Quimby was of medium height, small in stature, his weight about one hundred and twenty-five pounds; quick-motioned and nervous, with piercing black eyes, black hair and whiskers; a well-shaped, well-balanced head; high, broad forehead, and

<sup>1</sup> See the *New England Magazine*, March, 1888.

a rather prominent nose, and a mouth indicating strength and firmness of will; persistent in what he undertook, and not easily defeated or discouraged.<sup>1</sup>

“In the course of his trials with subjects he met a young man named Lucius Burkmar, over whom he had the most wonderful influence; and it is not stating it too strongly to assert that with him he made some of the most astonishing exhibitions of mesmerism and clairvoyance that have been given in modern times.

“At the beginning of these experiments, Mr. Quimby firmly believed that the phenomenon was the result of animal magnetism, and that electricity had more or less to do with it. Holding to this, he was never able to perform his experiments with satisfactory results when the ‘conditions’ were not right, as he believed they should be. For instance, during a thunder-storm his trials would prove utter failures. If he pointed the sharp end of a steel instrument at Lucius, Lucius would start as if pricked by a pin; but when the blunt end was pointed toward him, he would remain unmoved.

“One evening, after making some experiments with excellent results, Mr. Quimby found that during the time of the tests there had been a severe thunder-storm; but, so interested was he in his experiments, he had not noticed it. This led him to further investigate the subject; and the results reached were that, instead of the subject being influenced by any atmospheric disturbance, the effects produced were brought about by the influence of one mind on another. From that time he could produce as good results during a storm as in pleasant weather, and could make his subject start by simply

<sup>1</sup>George A. Quimby, as above cited.

pointing a finger at him as well as by using a steel instrument.

“Mr. Quimby’s manner of operating with his subject was to sit opposite him, holding both his hands in his, and looking him intently in the eye for a short time, when the subject would go into that state known as the mesmeric sleep, which was, more properly, a peculiar condition of mind and body, in which the natural senses would or would not operate at the will of Mr. Quimby. When conducting his experiments, all communications on the part of Mr. Quimby with Lucius were mentally given, the subject replying as if spoken to aloud.

“For several years Mr. Quimby travelled with young Burkmarr through Maine and New Brunswick, giving exhibitions, which at that time attracted much attention and secured notices through the columns of the newspapers.

“It should be remembered that at the time Mr. Quimby was giving these exhibitions, over forty-five years ago,<sup>1</sup> the phenomenon was looked upon in a far different light from that of the present day. At that time it was a deception, a fraud, and a humbug; and Mr. Quimby was vilified and frequently threatened with mob violence, as the exhibitions smacked too strongly of witchcraft to suit the people.

“As the subject gained more prominence, thoughtful men began to investigate the matter, and Mr. Quimby was often called upon to have his subject examine the sick. He would put Lucius into the mesmeric state, who would then examine the patient, describe his disease, and prescribe remedies for its cure.

<sup>1</sup> 1838-1842.

"After a time Mr. Quimby became convinced that whenever the subject examined a patient his diagnosis of the case would be identical with what either the patient himself or some one present believed, instead of Lucius really looking into the patient, and giving the true condition of the organs; in fact, that he was reading the opinion in the mind of some one, rather than stating a truth acquired by himself.

"Becoming firmly satisfied that this was the case, and having seen how one mind could influence another, and how much there was that had always been considered as true, but was merely some one's opinion, Mr. Quimby gave up his subject, Lucius, and began the developing of what is now known as mental healing, or curing disease through the mind. In accomplishing this he spent years of his life fighting the battle alone and labouring with an energy and steadiness of purpose that shortened it many years.

"To reduce his discovery to a science, which could be taught for the benefit of suffering humanity was the all-absorbing idea of his life. To develop his 'theory,' or 'the truth,' as he always termed it, so that others than himself could understand and practise it, was what he laboured for. Had he been of a sordid and grasping nature, he might have acquired unlimited wealth; but for that he seemed to have no desire.

"In a magazine article it is impossible to follow the slow stages by which he reached his conclusions; for slow they were, as each step was in opposition to all the established ideas of the day, and was ridiculed and combated by the whole medical faculty and the great mass of the people. In the sick and suffering he always found staunch friends, who loved him and believed in him,



and stood by him; but they were but a handful compared with those on the other side.

“While engaged in his mesmeric experiments, Mr. Quimby became more and more convinced that disease was an error of the mind, and not a real thing; and in this he was misunderstood by others, and accused of attributing the sickness of the patient to the imagination, which was the reverse of the fact. No one believed less in the imagination than he. ‘If a man feels a pain, he knows he feels it, and there is no imagination about it,’ he used to say.

“But the fact that the pain might be a state of the mind, while apparent in the body, he did believe. As one can suffer in a dream all that it is possible to suffer in a waking state, so Mr. Quimby averred that the same condition of mind might operate on the body in the form of disease, and still be no more of a reality than was the dream.

“As the truths of his discovery began to develop and grow in him, just in the same proportion did he begin to lose faith in the efficacy of mesmerism as a remedial agent in the cure of the sick; and after a few years he discarded it altogether. Instead of putting the patient into a mesmeric sleep, Mr. Quimby would sit by him; and, after giving him a detailed account of what his troubles were, he would simply converse with him, and explain the causes of the troubles, and thus change the mind of the patient, and disabuse it of its errors and establish the truth in its place; which, if done, was the cure. He sometimes, in cases of lameness and sprains, manipulated the limbs of the patient, and often rubbed the head with his hands, wetting them with water. He said it was so hard for the patient to believe that his

mere talk with him produced the cure, that he did this rubbing simply that the patient would have more confidence in him; but he always insisted that he possessed no 'power' or healing properties different from any one else, and that his manipulations conferred no beneficial effect upon the patient, although it was often the case that the patient himself thought they did. On the contrary, Mr. Quimby always denied emphatically that he used any mesmeric or mediumistic power.

"He was always in his normal condition when engaged with his patient. He never went into a trance, and was a strong disbeliever in spiritualism, as understood by that name. He claimed that his only power consisted in his wisdom, in his understanding of the patient's case, and his ability to explain away the error and establish the truth, or health, in its place. Very frequently the patient could not tell how he was cured; but it did not follow that Mr. Quimby himself was ignorant of the manner in which he performed the cure.

"Suppose a person should read an account of a railroad accident, and see, in the list of killed, a son. The shock on the mind would cause a deep feeling of sorrow on the part of the parent, and possibly a severe sickness, not only mental, but physical. Now, what is the condition of the patient? Does he imagine his trouble? Is it not real? Is his body not affected, his pulse quick; and has he not all the symptoms of a sick person, and is he not really sick? Suppose you can go and say to him that you were on the train, and saw his son alive and well after the accident, and prove to him that the report of his death was a mistake. What follows? Why, the patient's mind undergoes a change immediately, and he is no longer sick.

“ It was on this principle that Mr. Quimby treated the sick. He claimed that ‘ mind was spiritual matter, and could be changed ’; that we were made up of ‘ truth and error ’; that ‘ disease was an error, or belief, and that the truth was the cure.’ And upon these premises he based all his reasoning, and laid the foundation of what he asserted to be the ‘ science of curing the sick ’ without other remedial agencies than the mind.”

Very much has sometimes been made of the fact that Mr. Quimby was once a mesmerist, and some have contended that he was never anything more. The simple facts are that mesmerism afforded him an opportunity to discover his own powers, and that when he saw the significance of mesmeric phenomena he discarded both the theory and the practice. This was years before his public work as a mental healer. That this was the case, the following quotations also show. In a lecture delivered in Boston, in 1887, at the request of those who wished to know about Mr. Quimby,<sup>1</sup> Julius A. Dresser said :

“ The first that I knew of P. P. Quimby was in June, 1860, when I went to him as a patient, in Portland, Maine. This was five and a half years before his death. He had then been in the regular practice of mental healing for many years, in different towns in Maine, and had been located in Portland about two years. There was at that time, 1860, no one else in the practice in New England or in this country; nor was there at that time any one else who understood it as a science, he having

<sup>1</sup> *The True History of Mental Science*, Boston, 1887; new edition, 1899.

been the discoverer and founder. He had then been at work more than twenty years in this field of discovery and practice.

“The question may be asked, Was Quimby ever a mesmerist? I reply that he was, for a limited time, and for purposes of experiment and investigation. The truth came to him, not as a revelation pure and simple, but as the result of practical experiment and patient research, urged on by the impulses of an active, inquiring, comprehensive mind. I have seen extracts from newspapers as far back as 1842-43, giving accounts of his public exhibitions of mesmerism, in some of which he was rated with a few others in this country and Europe who were the leading mesmerisers in the world. . . .

“In his mesmeric experiments, as reported in the Maine papers in those years so long ago, Quimby is shown to have progressed gradually *out* of mesmerism into a knowledge of the hidden powers of minds. He soon found in man a principle, or a power, that was not of man himself, but was higher than man, and of which he could become a medium. Its character was goodness and intelligence, and its power was great. He also found that disease was primarily an erroneous belief of mind. Here was a discovery of truth; and on this discovery he founded a system of treating the sick, and founded a science of life.”

In a circular addressed to the sick, Mr. Quimby thus described his own system:

“My practice is unlike all medical practice. I give no medicine, and make no outward applications. I tell the patient his troubles, and what he thinks is his disease;

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and my explanation is the cure. If I succeed in correcting his errors, I change the fluids of the system and establish *the truth, or health. The truth is the cure.* This mode of practice applies to all cases."

Commenting on this specific statement, Mr. Dresser continues:

"These are Mr. Quimby's own words, and any one can see that they mean a purely mental treatment; for he speaks of what the patient *thinks* is his disease, and calls it his error, by saying that, if he succeeds in correcting the patient's errors, he then establishes the truth, and *the truth is the cure.* You see from this that he had discovered that disease was due to an error of mind, and the God-power of truth which he had discovered in man, being set up again in the victim of disease, destroyed the error, or disease, and re-established the harmony.

"This discovery, you observe, was not made from the Bible, but from the study of mental phenomena and as the result of searching investigations; and, after the truth was discovered, he found his new views portrayed and illustrated in Christ's teachings and works. If you think this seems to show that Quimby was a remarkable man, let me tell you that he was one of the most unassuming men who ever lived; for no one could well be more so, or make less account of his own achievements. Humility was a marked feature of his character (I knew him intimately). To this was united a benevolent and an unselfish nature, and a love of truth, with remarkably keen intuitive powers. But the distinguishing feature of his mind was that he could not entertain an opinion, because it was not knowledge. His faculties were so prac-

tical and intuitive that the wisdom of mankind, which is largely made up of opinions, was of little value to him. Hence the charge that he was not an educated man is literally true. True knowledge to him was *positive proof* as in a problem of mathematics. Therefore, he discarded books and sought phenomena, where his intuitive faculties made him master of the situation. Therefore he got from his experiments in mesmerism what other men did not—a stepping-stone to a higher knowledge than man possessed, and a new range to mental vision.”<sup>1</sup>

But the best testimony is given in Mr. Quimby’s own words. The following quotation, from a manuscript dated 1863, was read in the lecture referred to above and afterwards published in *The True History of Mental Science*, but its real value has been lost sight of owing to the fact that it was quoted in another connection :

“MY CONVERSION FROM DISEASE TO HEALTH, AND THE SUBSEQUENT CHANGE FROM BELIEF IN THE MEDICAL FACULTY TO ENTIRE DISBELIEF IN IT, AND TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH ON WHICH I BASE MY THEORY.

“Can a theory be found, capable of practice, which can separate truth from error? I undertake to say there is a method of reasoning which, being understood, can separate one from the other. Men never dispute about a fact that can be demonstrated by scientific reasoning. Controversies arise from some idea that has been turned into a false direction, leading to a false position. The

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, new edition, p. 10.

basis of my reasoning is this point: that whatever is true to a person, if he cannot prove it, is not necessarily true to another. Therefore, because a person says a thing is no reason that he says true. The greatest evil that follows taking an opinion for a truth is disease. Let medical and religious opinions, which produce so vast an amount of misery, be tested by the rule I have laid down, and it will be seen how much they are founded in truth. For twenty years I have been testing them, and I have failed to find one single principle of truth in either. This is not from any prejudice against the medical faculty; for, when I began to investigate the mind, I was entirely on that side. I was prejudiced in favour of the medical faculty; for I never employed any one outside of the regular faculty, nor took the least particle of quack medicine.

"Some thirty years ago I was very sick, and was considered fast wasting away with consumption. At that time I became so low that it was with difficulty I could walk about. I was all the while under allopathic practice, and I had taken so much calomel that my system was said to be poisoned with it, and I lost many of my teeth from that effect. My symptoms were those of any consumptive, and I had been told that my liver was affected, and my kidneys were diseased, and that my lungs were nearly consumed. I believed all this, from the fact that I had all the symptoms, and could not resist the opinions of the physician while having the proof within me. In this state I was compelled to abandon my business; and, losing all hope, I gave up to die, not that I thought the medical faculty had no wisdom, but that my case was one that could not be cured.

"Having an acquaintance who cured himself by riding

horseback, I thought I would try riding in a carriage, as I was too weak to ride horseback. My horse was contrary; and once, when about two miles from home, he stopped at the foot of a long hill, and would not start except as I went by his side. So I was obliged to run nearly the whole distance. Having reached the top of the hill I got into the carriage; and, as I was very much exhausted, I concluded to sit there the balance of the day, if the horse did not start. Like all sickly and nervous people, I could not remain easy in that place; and, seeing a man ploughing, I waited till he had ploughed around a three-acre lot, and got within sound of my voice, when I asked him to start my horse. He did so, and at the time I was so weak I could scarcely lift my whip. But excitement took possession of my senses, and I drove the horse as fast as he could go, up hill and down, till I reached home; and when I got into the stable I felt as strong as I ever did. . . .

“When I commenced to mesmerise, I was not well, according to the medical science, but in my researches I found a remedy for my disease. Here was where I first discovered that mind was matter,<sup>1</sup> and capable of being changed. Also, that disease being a deranged state of mind, the cause I found to exist in our belief. The evidence of this theory I found in myself, for like all others I had believed in medicine. Disease and its power over life, and its curability, are all embraced in our belief. Some believe in various remedies, and others believe that the spirits of the dead prescribe. I have no confidence in the virtue of either. I know that cures have been made in these ways. I do not deny them. But

<sup>1</sup> By this Mr. Quimby means “spiritual matter,” or substance, a term which will be explained in later chapters.



the principle on which they are done is the question to solve, for disease can be cured, with or without medicine, on *but one principle*.<sup>1</sup> I have said I believed in the old practice, and its medicines, the effect of which I had within myself; for, knowing no other way to account for the phenomena, I took it for granted that they were the result of medicine.

“With this mass of evidence staring me in the face, how could I doubt the old practice? Yet, in spite of all my prejudices, I had to yield to a stronger evidence than man’s opinion, and discard the whole theory of medicine, practised by a class of men, some honest, some ignorant, some selfish, and all thinking that the world must be ruled by their opinions.

“Now for my particular experience. I had pains in the back, which they said were caused by my kidneys, which were partially consumed. I also was told that I had ulcers on my lungs. Under this belief, I was miserable enough to be of no account in the world. This was the state I was in when I commenced to mesmerise. On one occasion, when I had my subject asleep, he described the pains I felt in my back (I had never dared to ask him to examine me, for I felt sure that my kidneys were nearly gone), and he placed his hand on the spot where I felt the pain. He then told me that my kidneys were in a very bad state; that one was half consumed, and a piece three inches long had separated from it, and was only connected by a slender thread. This was what I believed to be true, for it agreed with what the doctors

<sup>1</sup>This, for Mr. Quimby, is a fundamental proposition. It is important to bear this statement in mind when considering the later developments of this theory.

told me, and with what I had suffered, for I had not been free from pain for years. My common sense told me that no medicine would ever cure this trouble, and therefore I must suffer till death relieved me. But I asked him if there was any remedy? He replied, 'Yes, I can put the piece on so it will grow and you will get well.' At this, I was completely astonished, and knew not what to think. He immediately placed his hands upon me, and said he united the pieces so they would grow. The next day he said they had grown together, and from that day I never have experienced the least pain from them.

"Now what is the secret of the cure? I had not the least doubt but that I was as he described; and if he had said, as I expected that he would, that nothing could be done, I should have died in a year or so. But when he said he could cure me in the way he proposed, I began to think, and I discovered that I had been deceived into a belief that made me sick. The absurdity of his remedies made me doubt the fact that my kidneys were diseased, for he said in two days they were as well as ever. If he saw the first condition, he also saw the last, for in both cases he said he could see. I concluded in the first instance that he read my thoughts, and when he said he could cure me, he drew on his own mind; and his ideas were so absurd that the disease vanished by the absurdity of the cure. This was the first stumbling-block I found in the medical science. I soon ventured to let him examine me further, and in every case he would describe my feelings, but would vary about the amount of disease, and his explanation and remedies always convinced me that I had no such disease, and that my troubles were of my own make.

“At this time I frequently visited the sick with Lucius, by invitation of the attending physician; and the boy examined the patient, and told facts that would astonish everybody, and yet every one of them was believed. For instance, he told a person affected as I had been, only worse, that his lungs looked like a honeycomb, and his liver was covered with ulcers. He then prescribed some simple herb tea and the patient recovered, and the doctor believed the medicine cured him. But I believed that the doctor made the disease, and his faith in the boy made a change in the mind, and the cure followed. Instead of gaining confidence in the doctors, I was forced to the conclusion that their science is false. Man is made up of truth and belief, and if he is deceived into a belief that he has, or is liable to have, a disease, the belief is catching and the effect follows it. I have given the experience of my emancipation from this belief and from confidence in the doctors, so that it may open the eyes of those who stand where I was. I have risen from this belief, and I return to warn my brethren, lest when they are disturbed they shall get into this place of torment prepared by the medical faculty. Having suffered myself, I cannot take advantage of my fellow-men by introducing a new mode of curing disease and prescribing medicine. My theory exposes the hypocrisy of those who undertake to cure in that way. They make ten diseases to one cure, thus bringing a surplus of misery into the world, and shutting out a healthy state of society. They have a monopoly, and no theory that lessens disease can compete with them. When I cure there is one disease the less<sup>1</sup>; but not so when others cure, for the

<sup>1</sup> That is, Mr. Quimby explained the genesis of the disease so that a recurrence could be avoided.

supply of sickness shows that there is more disease on hand than there ever was. Therefore, the labour for health is slow, and the manufactory of disease is greater. The newspapers teem with advertisements of remedies, showing that the supply of disease increases. My theory teaches man to manufacture health; and when people go into this occupation disease will diminish, and those who furnish disease and death will be few and scarce."

Referring to this account of Mr. Quimby's experience, the lecture on "the true history" continues:

"This account settles many things. First, it gives in detail *one* of the *many* experiences by which Mr. Quimby discovered this truth. It shows, also, the practical nature of the man's mind, and illustrates his wonderful intuitive powers. And the article shows that no one could have written it but the one whose experience it describes; and it shows, too, that what he arrived at was the knowledge that disease is due to an error of belief, to be corrected by the truth. On this basis he practised ever afterward. How could he do otherwise, after making such a discovery? And this discovery was made about forty-five years ago. All these facts can be fully substantiated by consulting certain newspaper files, and certain persons who are familiar with it all. And this theory, that disease is an error of belief to be corrected by the truth, not only formed the basis of 'a science of health' which Mr. Quimby introduced, but it is the subject of voluminous manuscripts devoted to the 'true science of life and happiness,' and others in which he explained and defended Christ's sayings, his gospel, and his work. He also wrote upon the true standard of law

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and of government, and upon other topics. All these writings I have read, being in the confidence of George A. Quimby, the son, who holds them.

“Such is the spirit of the kind of truth that I learned from P. P. Quimby, and the kind that he himself practised; and his spirit of love so opened his soul to the God-power that his works were marvellous. The quick cures that he wrought have not been equalled by any one since his time, so far as I know. Myself and wife have owed our lives to him for nearly twenty-seven years, and to the truth he revealed to us.<sup>1</sup> Thousands of others could make a similar testimony, but I prefer not to occupy time with relating his cures. The man himself never desired publicity. The truth itself and the good of humanity were the first and last considerations with him. He even had no fixed name for his theory or practice, desiring to be known only by his fruits. He sank the individual wholly in the cause of truth and the good of humanity.

“It is the intention of your speaker to relate this history so as to avoid any appearance of fulsome praise, because the man Quimby would not desire it; and it is my aim only to relate plain facts in a plain manner, and I request you therefore to consider no statement herein as overdrawn. Your attention is called to one important fact, and that is, that the kind of individual I am describing in the person of P. P. Quimby is the kind who *can make discoveries of truth*, if any one can, that is, a mind of great capabilities, coupled with great humility and extreme unselfishness. This is the kind of instru-

<sup>1</sup> This was written in 1887.

ment that God speaks through, because such a soul is open to the divine inspiration. On the other hand, a selfish soul, who seeks personal aggrandisement, is not open to revelations of much moment, because selfishness always blinds one. The truth does not flourish in such soil.

“P. P. Quimby’s intuitive powers were remarkable. He always told the patient, at the first sitting, what the latter thought was his disease; and, as he was able to do this, he never allowed the patient to tell him anything about his case. Quimby would also tell the patient what the circumstances were which first caused the trouble, explain to him how he fell into his error, and then from this basis prove to him, in many instances, that his state of suffering was an error of mind, and not what he thought it was. Thus his system of treating diseases was really and truly a science, which proved itself. You see, also, from these statements, how he taught his patients to understand, and how persons who went to him for treatment were instructed in the truth, as well as restored to health. In this way some of his patients became especially instructed, as did your speaker.

“Nearly all, in those days, who were willing to try a practitioner outside of the medical schools, had exhausted every means of help within those schools; and, when finally booked for the grave, they would send for or go to Quimby. As he expressed it, they would send for him and for the undertaker at the same time, and the one who got there first would get the case. Consequently, his battle with error, alone and single-handed, was a hard one, especially as in those days there was much less liberality than now.

“Some may desire to ask if, in his practice, he ever in any way used manipulation. I reply that, in treating

a patient, after he had finished his explanations, and the silent work, *which completed the treatment*, he usually rubbed the head two or three minutes, in a brisk manner, for the purpose of letting the patient see that something was done. This was a measure of securing the confidence of the patient at a time when he was starting a new practice, and stood alone in it. I knew him to make many and quick cures at a distance, sometimes with persons he never saw at all. He never considered the touch of the hand as at all necessary, but let it be governed by circumstances, as was done eighteen hundred years ago.

“This truth which P. P. Quimby brought forth, and for years laboured unceasingly to give to the world, and finally laid down his life in its cause—this glorious truth is still blessing us; and it will do so more and more unto the perfect day. It is a revelation of truth that makes us free indeed! And we have only to set aside self-love and self-glory and work earnestly in this cause, by every word and deed of love that opportunity offers, to find ourselves growing gradually into all wisdom and understanding, and out of and away from every ill and every form of unhappiness.”

The lecture closed with the following quotation from Mr. Quimby's manuscripts:

“Every disease is the invention of man, and has no identity in wisdom; but, to those who believe it, it is a truth.<sup>1</sup> If everything man does not understand were

<sup>1</sup>That is, it is due to man's erroneous use of powers that were meant for his good. By the term “identity,” as here used, Mr. Quimby means reality.

blotted out, what would be left of man? Would he be better or worse, if nine-tenths of all he thinks he knows were blotted out of his mind, and he existed with what is true?

“ I contend that he would, as it were, sit on the clouds, and see the world beneath him tormented with ideas that form living errors, whose weight is ignorance. Safe from their power he would not return to the world’s belief for any consideration.

“ In a slight degree, this is my case. I sit, as it were, in another world or condition, as far above the belief in disease as the heavens are above the earth, and though safe myself, I grieve for the sins of my fellow-man; and I am reminded of the words of Jesus when he beheld the misery of his countrymen: ‘ O Jerusalem! How often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens, but ye would not.’

“ I hear this truth now pleading with man to listen to the voice of reason. I know from my own experience with the sick that their troubles are the effect of their own belief; not that their belief is the truth, but their beliefs act upon their minds, bringing them into subjection to their belief, and their troubles are a change that follows.

“ Disease is a reality to all mankind; but I do not include myself, because I stand outside of it, where I can see things real to the world and things that are real to wisdom. I know that I can distinguish that which is false from a truth, in religion, or in disease. To me, disease is always false; but, to those who believe it, it is a truth, and the errors of religion the same. Until the world is shaken by investigation, so that the rocks and mountains of religious error are removed and the medical



Babylon destroyed, sickness and sorrow will prevail. Feeling as I do, and seeing so many young people go on the broad road to destruction, I can say from the bottom of my soul: O Priestcraft! fill up the measure of your cups of iniquity, for on your head will come, sooner or later, the sneers and taunts of the people. Your theory will be overthrown by the voice of wisdom that will rouse the men of science, who will battle your error and drive you utterly from the face of the earth. Then there will arise a new science, followed by a new mode of reasoning, which shall teach man that to be wise and well is to unlearn his errors."

Continuing the sketch of his father's life already quoted from,<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Quimby says:

"In the year 1859 Mr. Quimby went to Portland, where he remained until the summer of 1865, treating the sick by his peculiar method. It was his custom to converse at length with many of his patients, who became interested in his method of treatment, and to try to unfold to them his ideas.

"Among his earlier patients in Portland were the Misses Ware, daughters of the late Judge Ashur Ware, of the U. S. Court; and they became much interested in 'the truth,' as he called it. But the ideas were so new, and his reasoning was so divergent from the popular conceptions, that they found it difficult to follow him or remember all he said; and they suggested to him the propriety of putting into writing the body of his thoughts.

"From that time he began to write out his ideas, which practice he continued until his death, the articles

<sup>1</sup> *New England Magazine*, March, 1888.

now being in the possession of the writer of this sketch. The original copy he would give to the Misses Ware, and it would be read to him by them; and, if he suggested any alteration, it would be made, after which it would be copied either by the Misses Ware or the writer of this and then re-read to him, that he might see that all was just as he intended it. Not even the most trivial word or the construction of a sentence would be changed without consulting him. He was given to repetition; and it was with difficulty that he could be induced to have a repeated sentence or phrase stricken out, as he would say, 'If that idea is a good one, and true, it will do no harm to have it in two or three times.' He believed in the hammering process, and of throwing an idea or truth at the reader till it should be firmly fixed in his mind. . . .

"Mr. Quimby, although not belonging to any church or sect, had a deeply religious nature, holding firmly to God as the first cause, and fully believing in immortality and progression after death, though entertaining entirely original conceptions of what death is. He believed that Jesus' mission was to the sick, and that he performed his cures in a scientific manner, and perfectly understood how he did them. Mr. Quimby was a great reader of the Bible, but put a construction upon it thoroughly in harmony with his train of thought. . . .

"Mr. Quimby's idea of happiness was to benefit mankind, especially the sick and suffering; and to that end he laboured and gave his life and strength. His patients not only found in him a doctor, but a sympathising friend; and he took the same interest in treating a charity patient that he did a wealthy one. Until the writer went with him as secretary, he kept no accounts

and made no charges. He left the keeping of books entirely with his patients; and, although he pretended to have a regular price for visits and attendance he took at settlement whatever the patient chose to pay him.

"The last five years of his life were exceptionally hard. He was overcrowded with patients and greatly overworked, and could not seem to find an opportunity for relaxation. At last nature could no longer bear up under the strain; and, completely tired out, he took to his bed, from which he never rose again. While strong, he had always been able to ward off any disease that would have affected another person; but, when tired out and weak, he no longer had the strength of will or the reasoning powers to combat the sickness which terminated his life.

"An hour before he breathed his last he said to the writer: 'I am more than ever convinced of the truth of my theory. I am perfectly willing for the change myself, but I know you will all feel badly; but I know that I shall be right here with you, just the same as I have always been. I do not dread the change any more than if I were going on a trip to Philadelphia.'

"His death occurred January 16, 1866, at his residence in Belfast, at the age of sixty-four years, and was the result of too close application to his profession, and of overwork. A more fitting epitaph could not be accorded him than in these words:

"'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' For, if ever a man did lay down his life for others, that man was Phineas Parkhurst Quimby."

## CHAPTER II

### PERSONAL TESTIMONY

**I**T was some time in 1860 that I first heard of Mr. Quimby. He was then practising his method of curing the sick in Portland. My home was a few miles from that city, and we often heard of the wonderful work he was doing. We also heard something about his philosophy; and, as he made war with the prevailing theories of the day, there was a strong prejudice against him in the minds of many people. His patients, however, became his friends, and he gradually won his way into the hearts of the people, especially among those who had received benefit from him, either through his practice or his ideas; and his fame spread more and more.

My own experience was very interesting, and was attended with most happy results. In fact, my first interview with Mr. Quimby marked a turning-point in my life, from which there has been no turning back.

I went to him in May, 1862, as a patient, after

<sup>1</sup> This chapter was in large part written by Annetta G. Dresser for a work now out of print, *The Philosophy of P. P. Quimby*, Boston, 1895. The chapter has been revised, with additions.

six years of great suffering, and as a last resort, after all other methods of cure had utterly failed to bring relief. I had barely faith enough to be willing to go to him, as I had been greatly prejudiced, and still had more of doubt and fear than expectancy of receiving help. But all fear was taken away when I met this good man, with his kindly though searching glance.

The events connected with this first interview are as vivid in mind as those of yesterday. It was like being turned from death to life, and from ignorance of the laws that governed me to the light of truth, in so far as I could understand the meaning of his explanations.

In order to understand the great change which then came into my life, let the reader picture a young girl taken away from school, deprived of all the privileges enjoyed by her associates, shut up for six years in a sick-room, under many kinds of severe and experimental treatment in its worst forms, constantly growing worse, told by her minister that it was the will of God that she should suffer all this torture, seeing the effect of all this trying experience upon the dear ones connected with her,—simply struggling for an existence, and yet seeing no way of escape except through death,—and the reader will have some idea of the state I was in when taken before this strange physician. And, in order to complete the picture, let the reader imagine the inner conflict between all this that was so disheartening and a hope that never wavered, a feeling that

there was a way of escape, if it could only be found, a conviction deeper than all this agony of soul and body that the whole situation was wrong, that the torturing treatment was wholly unnecessary, and that it was not God's will that any one should be kept in such a prison of darkness and suffering.

To have this great hope realised was indeed like the glad escape of a prisoner from the darkest and most miserable dungeon. Yet timid, and expecting to find a man without sympathy, who would attempt some sort of magic with me, it was naturally with much fear and trembling that I made my first visit to his office.

Instead of this, I found a kindly gentleman who met me with such sympathy and gentleness that I immediately felt at ease. He seemed to know at once the attitude of mind of those who applied to him for help, and adapted himself to them accordingly. His years of study of the human mind, of sickness in all its forms, and of the prevailing religious beliefs, gave him the ability to see through the opinions, doubts, and fears of those who sought his aid, and put him in instant sympathy with their mental attitude. He seemed to know that I had come to him feeling that he was a last resort, and with but little faith in him or his mode of treatment. But, instead of telling me that I was not sick, he sat beside me, and explained to me what my sickness was, how I got into the condition, and the way I could have been taken out of it through the right understanding. He seemed to see through the situ-

ation from the beginning, and explained the cause and effect so clearly that I could see a little of what he meant. My case was so serious, however, that he did not at first tell me I could be made well. But there was such an effect produced by his explanation that I felt a new hope within me, and began to get well from that day.

He continued to explain my case from day to day, giving me some idea of his theory and its relation to what I had been taught to believe, and sometimes sat silently with me for a short time. I did not understand much that he said, but I felt "the spirit and the life" that came with his words; and I found myself gaining steadily. Some of these pithy sayings of his remained constantly in mind, and were very helpful in preparing the way for a better understanding of his thought, such, for instance, as his remark, that "Whatever we believe, that we create," or, "Whatever opinion we put into a thing, that we take out of it."

The general effect of these quiet sittings with him was to light up the mind, so that one came in time to understand the troublesome experiences and problems of the past in the light of his clear and convincing explanations. I remember one day especially, when a panorama of past experiences came before me, and I saw just how my trouble had been made; how I had been kept in bondage and enslaved by the doctors and the false opinions that had been given me. From that day the connection was broken with these painful experiences and

the terrible practices and experiments which had added so much to my trouble; and I lived in a larger and freer world of thought.

The most vivid remembrance I have of Mr. Quimby is his appearance as he came out of his private office ready for the next patient. That indescribable sense of conviction, of clear-sightedness, of energetic action—that something that made one feel that it would be useless to attempt to cover up or hide anything from him—made an impression never to be forgotten. Even now in recalling it, after thirty-three years, I can feel the thrill of new life which came with his presence and his look. There was something about him that gave one a sense of perfect confidence and ease in his presence, —a feeling that immediately banished all doubts and prejudices, and put one in sympathy with that quiet strength or power by which he wrought his cures.

We took our turn in order, as we happened to come to the office; and, consequently, the reception-room was usually full of people waiting their turn. People were coming to Mr. Quimby from all parts of New England, usually those who had been given up by the best practitioners, and who had been persuaded to try this new mode of treatment as a last resort. Many of these came on crutches or were assisted into the office by some friend; and it was most interesting to note their progress day by day, or the remarkable change produced by a single sitting with the doctor. I remem-



ber one woman who had used crutches for twenty years, who walked without them after a few weeks.

Among those in waiting were usually several friends or pupils of Mr. Quimby, who often met in his rooms to talk over the truths he was teaching them. It was a rare privilege for those who were waiting their turn for treatment to listen to these discussions between the strangers and these disciples of his, also to get a sentence now and then from the doctor himself, who would often express some thought that would set us to thinking deeply or talking earnestly.

In this way Mr. Quimby did considerable teaching; and this was his only opportunity to make his ideas known. He did not teach his philosophy in a systematic way in classes or lectures. His personal explanations to each patient, and his readiness to explain his ideas to all who were interested, brought him in close sympathy with all who went to him for help. But further than that he had no time for teaching, as he was always overrun with patients.

Those were days to be remembered. One who never saw him can hardly imagine the conviction of truth that one felt when he uttered a sentence. He seemed to see through all the falsities of life, and far into the depths and into the spirit of things; and his penetrating vision was so keen and true that one felt as if in the presence of a great light that could destroy the darkness of all that stood in his way.

We all loved him truly and devotedly; for how

could we help it? He was full of love for humanity, and he was constantly labouring for others without regard to himself. It has always seemed strange to me that any one who knew him and was taught by him could ever forget his loving sympathy and kindness of heart. He was one that inspired all honest souls with a conviction of his own sincerity. He had nothing to gain or lose; for his own life was a constant outflowing of the spirit of truth in which he lived.

Consequently, he freely gave of all that he had; and if any one evinced any particular interest in his theory he would lend his manuscripts and allow his early writings to be copied. Those interested would in turn write articles about his "theory" or "the truth," as he called it, and bring them to him for his criticism. But no one thought of making any use of these articles while he lived, or even to try his mode of treatment in a public way; for all looked up to him as the master whose works so far surpassed anything they could do that they dared not try.

It was also at this time, 1862, that Mrs. Eddy [then Mrs. Patterson], author of *Science and Health*, was treated by Mr. Quimby; and I well remember the day when she was helped up the steps to his office on the occasion of her first visit for mental treatment. She was cured by him, and afterwards became very much interested in his theory. But she put her own construction on much of his teaching, and developed a doctrine which is for the most part a one-sided interpretation of the Quimby philosophy.

This does not seem strange when one considers how much there was to learn from a man as original as Mr. Quimby, and one who had so long investigated the human mind. Unless one had passed through a similar experience, and penetrated to the centre of things as he had, one could not appreciate his explanations sufficiently to carry out his particular line of thought. Hence none of the systems that have sprung up since Mr. Quimby's death, although originating in his researches and practice, have justly represented his philosophy.

His treatment did not consist of denials and affirmations, nor did he treat any two cases alike. He had a wonderful power of adaptability, and used such language and illustrations as were suggested by the calling or belief of his patients. Thus, in talking with a musician he would use music as an illustration. His treatment was largely explanatory—an explanation of the real as opposed to the seeming condition of the patient. He seemed to make a complete separation between the sufferer and the sickness, and he talked to the sufferer in such a manner that, gradually, his senses would become attached to the new life or wisdom which his words conveyed instead of the painful sensations; and, as this continued, the sickness disappeared.

In one of his articles, written in 1861, Mr. Quimby thus describes his method of cure:

“A patient comes to see Mr. Quimby. He renders himself absent to everything but the impression of the

person's feelings. These are quickly daguerreotyped on him. They contain no intelligence, but shadow forth a reflection of themselves which he looks at. This contains the disease as it appears to the patient. Being confident that it is the shadow of a false idea, he is not afraid of it. . . . Then his feelings<sup>1</sup> in regard to the disease, which are health and strength, are daguerreotyped on the receptive plate of the patient, which also throws forth a shadow. The patient, seeing this shadow of the disease in a new light, gains confidence. This change of feeling is daguerreotyped on the doctor again. This also throws forth a shadow; and he sees the change, and continues to treat it in the same way. So the patient's feelings sympathise with his, the shadow changes and grows dim, and finally disappears, the light takes its place, and there is nothing left of the disease."

In a letter addressed to the editor of the *Portland Advertiser*, February 13, 1862, Mr. Quimby explains his position as follows:

"As you have given me the privilege of answering an article in your paper of the 11th inst., where you classed me with spiritualists, mesmerisers, clairvoyants, etc., I take this occasion to state where I differ from all classes of doctors, from the allopathic physician to the healing medium.

"All these admit disease as an independent enemy of mankind, but the mode of getting rid of it divides them in their practice. The old school admit that medicines

<sup>1</sup> That is, his wiser thinking, together with the idealistic mental pictures implied therein.

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contain certain curative properties, and that certain medicines will produce certain effects. This is their honest belief. The homœopathic physicians believe their infinitesimals produce certain effects. This is also honest. But I believe all their medicine is of infinitely less importance than the opinions that accompany it.

“ I never make war with medicine, but [with] opinions. I never try to convince a patient that his trouble arises from calomel or any other poison, but the poison of the doctor's opinion in admitting a disease.

“ But another class, under cover of spiritualism and mesmerism, claim power from another world; and to these my remarks are addressed. I was one of the first mesmerisers in the state who gave public experiments, and had a subject who was considered the best then known. He examined and prescribed for diseases just as this class do now. And I know just how much reliance can be placed on a medium; for, when in this state, they [the spiritualistic mediums] are governed by the superstition and beliefs of the person they are in communication with, and read their thoughts and feelings in regard to their disease, whether the patient is aware of them or not.

“ The capacity of thought-reading is the common extent of mesmerism. Clairvoyance is very rare, and can be easily tested by blindfolding the subject and giving him a book to read. If he can read without seeing, that is conclusive evidence that he has independent sight. This state is of very short duration. They then come into that state where they are governed by surrounding minds. All the mediums of this day reason about medicine as much as the regular physician. They believe in disease and recommend medicine.

"When I mesmerised my subject, he would prescribe some little simple herb that would do no harm or good of itself. In some cases this would cure the patient. I also found that any medicine could cure certain cases if he ordered it. This led me to investigate the matter, and arrive at the stand I now take: that the cure is not in the medicine, but in the confidence of the doctor or medium. A clairvoyant never reasons or alters his opinion; but if, in the first state of thought-reading he prescribes medicine, he must be posted by some mind interested in it, and also must derive his knowledge from the same source the doctors do.

"The subject I had left me, and was employed by —, who employed him in examining diseases in the mesmeric sleep, and taught him to recommend such medicines as he got up himself in Latin; and, as the boy did not know Latin, it looked very mysterious. Soon afterwards he was at home again, and I put him to sleep to examine a lady, expecting that he would go on in his old way; but instead of that he wrote a long prescription in Latin. I awoke him, that he might read it; but he could not. So I took it to the apothecary's, who said he had the articles, and that they would cost twenty dollars. This was impossible for the lady to pay. So I returned, and put him asleep again; and he gave his usual prescription of some little herb, and she got well.

"This, with the fact that all the mediums admit disease, and derive their knowledge from the common allopathic belief, convinces me that, if it were not for the superstition of the people, believing that these subjects, merely because they have their eyes shut, know more than the apothecaries, they could make few cures. Let any medium open his eyes, and let the patient describe

his disease, then the medicine would do about as much good as brown bread pills. But let the eyes be shut, and then comes the mystery. It is true they will tell the feelings, but that is all the difference.

"Now, I deny disease as a truth, but admit it as a deception, started like all other stories without any foundation, and handed down from generation to generation till the people believe it, and it has become a part of their lives. So they live a lie, and their senses are in it.<sup>1</sup>

"To illustrate this, suppose I tell a person he has the diphtheria; and he is perfectly ignorant of what I mean. So I describe the feelings, and tell the danger of the disease, and how fatal it is in many places. This makes the person nervous, and I finally convince him of the disease. I have now made one; and he attaches himself to it, and really understands it, and he is in it soul and body. Now he goes to work to make it, and in a short time it makes its appearance.

"My way of curing convinces him that he has been deceived; and, if I succeed, the patient is cured. As it is necessary that he should feel I know more than he does, I tell his feelings. This he cannot do to me, for I have no fears of diphtheria.

"My mode is entirely original. I know what I say; and they do not, if their word is to be taken. Just so long as this humbug of inventing disease continues, just so long the people will be sick and be deceived by the above-named crafts.

"P. P. QUIMBY."

<sup>1</sup> That is, the consciousness of the natural man is absorbed in it. Hence the disease is real for him, although it has no reality in spiritual truth.

It was Mr. Quimby's clear-cut perception and understanding of the case which enabled him to make this separation between the better or real self of the patient and the personal fear and beliefs which, as he says in the above illustration, were daguerreo-typed on him. The perception or explanation was itself the cure, and there was no need either of argument or of an attempt to transfer his thoughts to the patient. The separation once made, a change was bound to result; for the attention was carried with it, the whole mental attitude changed as well, and the patient was freed from the tormenting sensations and fears which had been all-absorbing—absorbing so long, and only so long, as the consciousness was turned in the wrong direction.<sup>1</sup>

His first effort, then, in every case was to free the sufferer from whatever held soul and body in bondage, and to make his explanation so clear that the patient should consciously see the whole experience in its true light; and every one knows that, when we see through a thing that has caused us trouble, its power over us is lost, just as when a startling rumour is denied, or as though one were to meet a lion in the forest, and then learn that he was chained, and could do no harm.

There seemed to be no obstacle to Mr. Quimby's mental vision. I once knew a lady to go to him simply to test his ability to read her. She remarked

<sup>1</sup> This process of separation between "the real man" and the imprisoning mental states and beliefs was an important step in Mr. Quimby's method of treatment.



to others that she did not believe he could help her, or tell her what caused her trouble. He received her as he would any one, and after a few moments—without a word having been spoken—took his chair, and, placing it before her, sat down with his back to her, saying: “That is the way you feel towards me. I think you do not need my services, and that you had better go home.”

The following quotation from a letter to a clergyman, under date of October 28, 1860, illustrates the care with which he discriminated between his own opinion and that of the higher Wisdom which enabled him to perform his wonderful cures:

“Your letter of the 18th was received; but, owing to a pressure of business, I neglected answering it. I will try to give you the wisdom you ask. So far as giving an opinion is concerned, it is out of my power as a physician, though as a man I might, but it would be of no service; for it would contain no wisdom except of this world. My practice is not of the wisdom of man, so my opinion as a man is of no value. Jesus said, ‘If I judge of myself, my judgment is not good, but, if I judge of God, it is right’; for that contains no opinion. So, if I judge as a man, it is an opinion; and you can get plenty of them anywhere.

“You inquire if I have ever cured any cases of chronic rheumatism? I answer, Yes; but there are as many cases of chronic rheumatism as there are of spinal complaint, so that I cannot decide your case by another. You cannot be saved by pinning your faith on another’s sleeve. Every one must answer for his own sins or be-

lief. Our beliefs are the cause of our misery, and our happiness and misery follow our belief. . . .

"You ask if my practice belongs to any known science. My answer is, No, it belongs to a Wisdom that is above man as man. . . . It was taught eighteen hundred years ago, and has never had a place in the heart of man since, but is in the world, and the world knows it not."

Again, in reply to a young physician in a letter dated September 16, 1860, he says:

"To answer any question with regard to my mode of treatment would be like asking a physician how he knows a patient has the typhoid fever by feeling the pulse, and request the answer direct, so that the person asking the question could sit down and be sure to define the disease from the answer. My mode of treatment is not decided in that way. . . . If it were in my power to give to the world the benefit of twenty years' hard study in one short or long letter, it would have been before the people long before this. The people ask they know not what. You might as well ask a man to tell you how to talk Greek without studying it as to ask me to tell you how I test the true pathology of disease, or how I test the true diagnosis of disease. All of these questions would be very easily answered if I assumed a standard, and then tested all disease by that standard.

"The old mode of determining the diagnosis of disease is made up of opinions about diseased persons, in their right mind and out of it, and under a nervous state of mind, all mixed up together and set down, accompanied by a certain state of pulse. In this dark chaos of error, they come to certain results like this: If you

see a man going towards the water, he is going in swimming; but if he is running, with his hat and coat off, he is either going to drown himself, or some one is drowning, and so on. This is the old way. Mine is this: If I see a person, I know it, and, if I feel the cold, I know it; but to see a person going towards the water is no sign that I know what he is going to do. . . .

“Now, like the latter [the old practitioners], do not deceive your patients. Try to instruct them and correct their errors. Use all the wisdom you have, and expose the hypocrisy of the profession in any one. Never deceive your patients behind their backs. Always remember that, as you feel about your patients, just so they feel towards you. If you deceive them, they lose confidence in you; and just as you prove yourself superior to them, they give you credit mentally. If you pursue this course, you cannot help succeeding.

“Be charitable to the poor. Keep the health of your patient in view, and, if money comes, all well; but do not let that get the lead. With all this advice, I leave you to your fate, trusting that the true Wisdom will guide you,—not in the path of your predecessors.

“P. P. Q.”

It was thus characteristic of Mr. Quimby to sink the man or personal self in his work, or that larger Self or Wisdom whence he derived his power; and whatever he urged upon another he always practised himself. Throughout his writings this same humility is uppermost; and whatever he wrote and said had a wonderful staying power, since it bore the emphasis of his own stimulating and kindly personality.

After the lapse of twenty-nine years since Mr. Quimby passed away,<sup>1</sup> the most and the best I can say of his teaching and the power of his example is that his theory has stood the severest tests of trouble and sickness in my own family as well as in many others, while his example has been an ever-present ideal. With him his theory was a life, a larger and nobler, a freer and wiser, life than that of the average man. To know the inexpressible depth and value of his teaching, one must live this life, and prove through long experience the truth of his philosophy. That his teaching has never failed in its application, and has been more than a substitute for all that it displaced, is at once the best evidence of its truth and the strongest argument in its favour.

<sup>1</sup> This was written by A. G. Dresser in 1895.

## CHAPTER III

### MIND AND DISEASE

"I AM often asked what I call my cures. I answer: The effect of a science, because I know how I do them. If I did not know, they would be a mystery to the world and myself." Thus, confidently expressing his faith in his discoveries, Mr. Quimby strikes the key-note of all his teaching. Aside from the desire to do immediate good to humanity, his underlying interest was in the development of "the science of life and happiness," as he usually called it.<sup>1</sup> In other passages in his writings, he speaks of his theory as "the science of health," for he maintained that the principles implied in his method of mental treatment were reducible to a science. Science is, of course, univocal. It is not dependent on revelations, books, or persons; nor can it be established in the face of facts. Mr. Quimby founded his own "science" on the study of facts, and had he been scientifically trained, in the modern sense of the term, he would have brought to bear the tests of the scientific method. But amidst

<sup>1</sup> In two instances he uses the term "Christian Science," meaning by this expression an actual, verifiable, disinterested science founded on the principles which Jesus' cures exemplified, not a doctrine founded on negations.

much that is crude and of the nature of pioneer work one detects the same spirit which inspires the inductive scientist. The genuine ideal was before him, and he made such headway as time and his own facilities permitted.

His first desire was to carry his investigations far enough so that some one else would take up the work, and develop his teachings as the basis of a new and more practical science. He had penetrated far enough into the meaning and mystery of life to grasp certain great laws and principles with mathematical clearness.<sup>1</sup> He saw that these laws were universal, that they did not depend on the opinions and learning of men for their support, but that, deep within every human soul, there was a source of guidance and inspiration which all could learn to know, even the simplest and least educated; for it was common to all. He also believed that, on the basis of his discoveries, "goodness" would some time be taught as a "science." By the term "science" as here used he meant something more than the art of moral life. He included under this head the spiritual or religious life, the expression of a higher wisdom than that of every-day thinking and religious belief.

Accordingly, he sought to make clear the distinction between the ever-changing opinions of the

<sup>1</sup> Portions of what follows were originally prepared as the writer's contribution to *The Philosophy of P. P. Quimby*. This exposition of the Quimby philosophy is based on a study of his manuscripts and on the account of his cures given by his followers.

world, the beliefs and inherited ideas of the natural man, and the unvarying wisdom of the inner or truly "scientific" man. He often spoke of these two elements of knowledge as two kingdoms, one of this world, or opinions, errors, and beliefs; the other not of this world, but an unchanging realm of truth, goodness, and eternal life. All that he wrote was permeated with this distinction between the two worlds, which he called "science" and "ignorance," wisdom and opinions, the real man and the natural man, Jesus and Christ; for he always distinguished between the individual self and that Christ or Wisdom in man which, so far as he possesses it, unites man with God.

His long-continued study of the human mind led him to emphasise the fact that man possesses a dual nature. Man himself is often a mere tool in the hands of others, to be moved here and there at the mercy of minds stronger than his own. But every man is in relation with this higher Wisdom; and, consciously or unconsciously, every man partakes of these two kingdoms of science and ignorance, and his happiness or misery depends on which one is uppermost. Therefore it is of the highest importance that man should understand himself, should know his real relations to society, how he is influenced and how to overcome the subtle influences by which he is surrounded; and to possess this knowledge is to understand this science which separates truth from error. To know the one self or kingdom from the other, to obey and develop the real

or spiritual self and overcome the self of opinions, is not only to possess, but to live "the science of life and happiness." Health and happiness will come in proportion as this truth is made concrete in daily life.

But to know one's self in terms of Mr. Quimby's philosophy is no slight task. With him this one word, "science," embraced the fruits of twenty years' experience and much that was incommunicable to those who had not experienced it. It is difficult to make clear and to do justice to a line of thought which depended so much on the originality and personal experience of its author. Hence it is important to bear in mind the essential points in the preceding accounts of his life and discoveries.

1. Mr. Quimby's first discovery was in regard to the influence of opinions and beliefs. He found his patients in a position similar to that in which human beings were placed at the dawn of civilisation, when natural phenomena, which now receive a scientific interpretation, were attributed to beings and shapes each of which had a separate office to perform. That is, people were suffering from a superstitious interpretation of what actually existed, but misunderstood. They were allured by false theories and exciting stories, and by blind leaders. They had been deceived, they had felt some slight pain, and in their fear had consulted a doctor, who had made a diagnosis which was of no value, described the symptoms, and named the sensation. Or they had become wrought up over some religious belief,



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and in their despair had become a prey to fancies and fears. It was his task to undeceive them, to explain the phenomena and the sensations correctly, to show the absurdity of their superstitious beliefs, and to explain how, with the doctor's help, they had created their disease out of some slight disturbance which in itself amounted to nothing. When Mr. Quimby called disease an "error" he therefore referred to the misinterpretation put upon sensation.

Mr. Quimby did not make his explanations by denying the reality of the patient's trouble or attributing it to the imagination. He made no such denials, but frankly admitted the existence of certain conditions which, to the sick person, were as real as life itself. But just as he sought the Wisdom above the world of opinion, and the Life beneath the realm of matter, so he looked for the prime cause of disease and suffering of all kinds in the mind which was conscious of it. This he found, like the superstitious beliefs of prehistoric man, in the misunderstanding of that which was an actual existence. His own effort in every case was to understand the actual situation, and to separate and free the mind from the fears, wrong beliefs, and feelings which had held the sufferer in bondage.

In one of his articles written to show the effect of these false interpretations and beliefs, Mr. Quimby uses the following illustration :

" When sitting by a sick person who had a pain in the left side, which I felt and described, I said, ' You think

you have consumption.' The patient acknowledged it, saying that her physician had examined her lungs, and found the left one very much affected. This she believed; and when I told her that her disease was in her mind it was as much as to say that she imagined what was not the case. I told her she did not understand what I meant by the mind.

"Then, taking up a glass of water, I said: 'Suppose you should be told that this water contained a poisonous substance that works in the system and sometimes produces consumption. If you really believe it, every time you drink the idea of poison enters your mind. Presently you begin to hack and cough a little. Would your fears then grow less that the water was poison? I think not.

"'Finally, you are given over by your doctor and friends, and call on me. I sit down by you, and tell you that you are nervous, and have been deceived by your doctor and friends. You ask, How? You have been told what is false; that the water you drink contains a slow poison, and now your cure hangs on the testimony in the case. If I show that there is no poison in the water, then the water did not poison you. What did? It was the doctor's opinion put in the water by your mind. As the mind is [spiritual] matter, or something that can receive an impression, it can be changed. This change was wrought by the doctor's opinion.' "

Many of the articles on this subject, written to expose the fallacy of the prevailing ideas about disease, read like trials in court. Mr. Quimby himself appears as the judge, pleading the cause of the sick

and showing the absurdity of the arguments whereby his patients were condemned to a life of suffering. He introduces both the minister and doctor, oftentimes the mother or some friend, allowing each one to speak freely in regard to the sufferer; and the case is often argued at great length.

Mr. Quimby was always fair in conducting such a case. His facts were drawn directly from the lives of the sick,—from what the doctors and friends had said about the case,—and were often written immediately after performing the cure which the article described. But he exposed the fallacies of the Church and of the so-called medical science of his day with an unsparing hand. He does not hesitate to call the minister and doctor “blind guides leading the blind”; and, while he has no personal feeling against them, he combats the errors and opinions by which they have held the sick in bondage with a determination to destroy every vestige of their false teachings.<sup>1</sup> He is most eloquent at times as he shows how the sick have been held in disease and superstition, when a simple explanation would have turned their thoughts and feelings into another channel and set them free. It is safe to say that never before or since has the cause of the sick been pleaded with such vigour, such power of conviction, as in these writings.

He placed no intelligence or strength in matter,

<sup>1</sup> The reference is, of course, to the old-school physician and to the Calvinistic theologian. Mr. Quimby's articles were written 1859-1865.

and did not regard the bodily condition alone as the disease. "The world," he said, "puts disease in the phenomenon, and guesses at the cause." The physician's opinion is put together from observation and questioning; therefore, "he is a doctor only in name." But "to cure an error intelligently is to know how to produce it, to know the real cause; and this embraces all man's ideas and wisdom."

This knowledge of the real cause Mr. Quimby possessed, and he found it, not alone in the conscious mind and the opinions and beliefs about disease, but in the mental influences and thoughts by which every person is surrounded, and in the subconscious mind; and he could tell an idea or cause from the sensation produced by it, "just as a person knows an orange by the odour."

2. But how, the reader will ask, can fears, unconscious mental influences, doctors' opinions, and false interpretations of sensation be so influential in the creation of disease? It is, indeed, a mystery to those who for the first time hear the theory of the mental origin of disease expounded to know how there can be any connection between mind and disease. For they were not conscious of having thought themselves into disease. In fact, they consciously, eagerly desired health. Moreover, it is plain enough, so they argue, that disease is physical. The mind may have something to do with the healing of disease. But how could thought actually give rise to physical disturbance? It is absurd to say that one simply imagines one's illness.

Disease is very real, and imagination alone is exceedingly light and airy in comparison with it.

Obviously, the critic is largely correct in all these judgments. No rational upholder of the mental-healing theory believes that disease is due to the imagination. Nor was it maintained by Mr. Quimby that people consciously think themselves into ill-health. It would be equally absurd to deny that disease is partly physical. To deny the physiological conditions of disease would be to adopt an artificial way of thinking. The mental theory must win its way by admitting all the facts, or not at all. Rational mind cure thrives, not by denial but by understanding; it urges both the sick and the therapist to make sure that all the facts are taken into account. To understand the deeper facts is to see that there is a more intelligible way of escape from disease than by mere reliance upon medical methods. Hence one must really understand the more rational mental theory before passing judgment upon it; and the way to understand it is to test it in actual practice.

The mystery in regard to the connection between mind and matter begins to be cleared up when one discovers that mental activity is not limited to the highly conscious life, but is intimately connected with the vast realm of subconscious life. In this deeper, more or less hidden part of our nature there is undoubtedly a close relation with the region which the investigators of the Society for Psychical Research denominate the "subliminal." Hence

the subconscious life is to be taken account of in telepathic and similar psychic experiences. It is also bound up with the organic life of the body, so that all actions known by physiologists as "automatic," as exemplifying "unconscious cerebration," come under this head. In short, our whole life is at any given moment subconscious except so far as certain feelings and thoughts arise from the subliminal realm into explicit consciousness. One cannot define the subconscious world except by inference, that is, in the light of that which develops out of it. But it is clear that it includes our organic life as surely as it partakes of psychic experiences. One cannot tell how far the organic life enters into the psychic experiences, since it is only the conscious resultants that are known. But, indefinite as our knowledge may be, it is clear that the notion of subconsciousness is a necessary factor in our thinking.

Such mental states as the reader's present concentration of attention on the subject now before us are typical of consciousness at its highest point. Besides these more acute mental states the reader is partially aware of varied perceptions of light, sound, heat, or cold, certain organic activities, and the resistance offered by the most immediate physical surroundings. Disturbing mental states occasionally break into the reader's chosen line of thought, and the mind wanders off now and then, either away from the subject entirely or in search of corroborative and conflicting facts of experience. Each of

these remembered experiences, long cherished in the great storehouse of the subconscious world, represents a more or less conscious relation to that world. When a judgment appeals to the mind as correct, consciousness forthwith seizes more actively upon it and thereby gives a dynamic tendency to the subconscious after-effects. Just as like thoughts aggregate to form positive conscious beliefs, so the tendency of subconsciousness is undoubtedly to increase a mental state which the will has thus dynamically defined. But our more voluntary thinking is probably typical of our semi-conscious impulsive life. Any mental state that for the time being commands attention is likely to influence one's subconscious functioning. The fact that a train of thought plays havoc does not mean that the mind has intelligently chosen it. The prognostications and forebodings which we half-thoughtlessly permit ourselves to dwell upon may be as subconsciously potent as the most wisely chosen ideals. It is probably the *power* that is upon the occasion exerted, not the quality of the thought, that is subconsciously effective. There seems to be no evidence that subconsciousness discriminates; it takes its clue from whatever absorbs the mind. A fear may, therefore, be as readily developed subconsciously as may an inspiration. Out from the deeper part of us our ideas are all the time emerging more potent than they entered it. New habits of thought and conduct are all the time being formed in this way. If the results are now desirable and now un-

desirable, no one may rightly blame subconsciousness. Only by carefully guarding all one's thinking, and all one's feelings as well, may one hope to eliminate the undesirable. No one could ask for a better illustration of subconscious functioning than the growth of an exceedingly troublesome morbid or painful mental state out of a comparatively insignificant sensation of pain which the mind was foolishly allowed to harbour.

3. Now, Mr. Quimby applied to this intermediate region between mind and matter, conscious and subconscious life, the curious term "spiritual matter," an expression which seems exceedingly obscure at first, but which is in reality a convenient figure of speech. For, according to his perception of the subconscious activities of a patient, Mr. Quimby learned that the mind in its assimilative state is rather like substance, fertile and responsive to energy impressed upon it, than like conscious processes in general. By the statement, "mind is matter," which he frequently uses in his articles on disease, Mr. Quimby did not mean that materialism is true, for he held an idealistic theory of matter; but that thoughts take definite shape like seeds and germinate in the favourable soil of our deeper life. Thoughts were still of a "spiritual" character, yet through their germinal activity they gave shape to the substance of the body. Mr. Quimby's keen insight revealed many processes in the life of suffering humanity which were subconscious to the sufferers. Hence he proposed a theory to fit the facts,



a theory which was intended to explain the deeper conditions of disease, not the obvious conditions or effects of the inner states. When, therefore, he spoke of disease as an "error," as due to "false reasoning," he had in mind the entire subconscious train of sequences which I have mentioned above. Obviously, the entire theory in question is put in a different light if one understands that it is the intermediate region between the mental and the physical that is to be taken into account. The superficial conclusions which people draw when told that disease is mentally originated show that they have not yet caught the drift of the new theory. To see the deeper drift of investigation is to begin to understand what Mr. Quimby meant when he said that it was possible to erect a "new science of life" on these discoveries.

4. In one of his articles on disease Mr. Quimby says: "Man, in his natural state, was no more liable to disease than the beast, but as soon as he began to reason he became diseased; for his disease was in his reason." Mr. Quimby attributed no intelligence to the "spiritual matter" which receives the false ideas concerning disease. The man who, feeling a painful sensation, consults a physician, and hears a description of the symptoms he is likely to suffer, involuntarily enters into the description given by the doctor. He has been born with the belief that disease is an "entity independent of man," which can seize him regardless of his belief. He has been taught that he must not eat this or that, must not

go here or go there, lest he "catch" some disease, and has lived all his life—unconsciously to himself—subject to these erroneous beliefs. The physician, instead of wisely turning the person's thought into another and healthier direction,—away from all thought of disease,—makes a physical diagnosis, says he thinks the person has this or that trouble, tells how people feel with that disease, and what the result is likely to be, and proceeds to doctor the effect, ignoring the real cause or disease completely.

Those who know much about the medical practice of to-day know that the same thing is going on now, the only difference being that the fashions, names, and theories have changed; and we now hear more about germs and bacteria, to which the same harmful opinions are attached. With all the advance in medical science since Mr. Quimby's time—and even he would not have denied that there are many good doctors—many physicians will give one opinion about a case one day, and another the next, while another doctor would express an opinion differing from both.

All this Mr. Quimby understood, and he could hardly restrain himself when he thought of the misery that was brought upon enslaved humanity by such false methods; for his investigations taught him that these descriptions and opinions, if accepted as true, acted like poison on the sufferer's mind.

"Spiritual matter," then, is a subtle, ethereal substance, wonderfully impressionable or responsive, on which these opinions, together with the

person's fears and beliefs in disease, are impressed or "daguerreotyped," where they take form, become more and more deeply rooted, until finally they become all-absorbing. Thus "whatever we believe, that we create"; for man is controlled primarily, not by physical states, but by his directions of mind.

Every thought was also in a sense "spiritual matter," but of a different combination from the mind in which it was sown like a seed. "Every idea," he says, "is the embodiment of an opinion resolved into an idea. This idea has life, or a chemical change; for it is the offspring of man's wisdom condensed into an idea, and our senses<sup>1</sup> are attached to it." Its power over us depends on the reliance we place upon it; and, if it comes from one whose word we trust, it is likely to master us, and finally to assume a character which makes it as real as life itself. And the reason is found in the existence of this ever-changing mind or "spiritual earth" in which ideas germinate or take form.

5. In the light of the foregoing explanation, a quotation like the following from a manuscript, dated August, 1861, is at once clear:

"After I found that mind was [spiritual] matter, I found that ideas were matter condensed into a solid called disease, and that this, like a book, contained all the wisdom of its author. Seeing the book,—for sight with Wisdom embraces all the senses,—I open it and see

<sup>1</sup> That is, our consciousness is absorbed in it.

through it. To the patient it is a sealed book; but to Wisdom there is nothing hid which cannot be revealed or seen, nor so far off that it cannot be reached. So I read the contents of the book to the patient, and show that it is false. Then, as the truth changes his mind, light takes the place of the darkness, till he sees through the error of disease. The light of Wisdom dissipates the matter, or disease, the patient once more finds himself freed of opinions, and happiness is restored."

The following is from an article dated December, 1861:

"Man is made of opinions,—of truth and error; and his life is a warfare like all other lives before him. . . . Man goes on developing error upon error till he is buried in his own belief; and it makes him but little higher than the animal kingdom. It is the office of Wisdom to explain the phenomena in man called disease, to show how it is made, and how it can be unmade. This is as much a science as it is to know how to decompose a piece of metal."

In an article in which Mr. Quimby undertakes to set forth his peculiar theory he says:

"I will now try to establish this science or rock, and upon it I will build the science of life. My foundation is animal matter, or life. This, set in action by Wisdom, produces thought. Thoughts, like grains of sand, are held together by their own sympathy, wisdom, or attraction. Now, [the natural] man is composed of these particles of matter, or thought, combined and

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arranged by Wisdom. As thought is always changing, so [the natural] man is always throwing off particles of thought and receiving others. Thus man is a progressive idea [being]; yet he is the same man, although he is changing all the time for better or worse. As his senses are in his wisdom and his wisdom is attached to his . . . body, his change of mind is under one of the two directions—either of this world of opinions or of God, or science; and his happiness or misery is the result of his wisdom.

“Now, as the idea man<sup>1</sup> has always been under the wisdom of this world, the scientific man has always been kept down, from the fact that no man has ever risen to that state where the scientific man could control the wisdom of the natural man. This has always caused man to be at war with himself. These two powers compose him, and the science [of life and happiness] lies in keeping the natural man in subjection to the scientific man. In this warfare, if the natural man rules, disease and unhappiness is the fate of the scientific man. If the latter rules, life and happiness is the reward.

“Now, I stand alone on this rock, fighting the errors of this world, and establish the science of life by my works. What is my mode of warfare? With the axe of truth I strike at the root of every tree or error and hew it down, so that there shall not be one error in man showing itself in the form of disease. My knowledge is not matter or opinions. It decomposes the thoughts, changes the combinations, and produces an idea clear from the error that makes a person unhappy or diseased.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> That is, the natural, changeable man. Mr. Quimby applied the term “scientific” to the spiritual man or permanent “identity.”

<sup>2</sup> March, 1861.

In another article, written in 1861, Mr. Quimby says:

"My object is the good of mankind, independent of all religious sects and creeds. It is a philosophy which, if understood, will make men free and independent of all creeds and laws of man, and subject him to his own agreement, he being free from the laws of sin, sickness, and death."

"Every one is made of matter,<sup>1</sup> and matter is continually going through a chemical change. This change is life, not wisdom, but is vegetable or mineral life. Every idea is matter, so of course it contains life in the name of something that can be changed. Motion, or change, is life. Ideas have life. A belief has life, or matter; for it can be changed. Now, all the aforesaid make up [the natural] man; and all this can be changed."

6. Bearing in mind the exceedingly figurative language of Mr. Quimby's manuscripts, we are now prepared to understand what he meant by the following paragraphs selected from various articles on disease:

"It may seem strange to those in health that our beliefs affect us. The fact is, there is nothing of us but belief. It is the whole capital and stock in trade of [the natural] man. It is all that can be changed, and embraces everything man has made or ever will make. . . .

"People never seem to have thought of the fact that

<sup>1</sup> That is, the natural man is changeable, subject to opinions.

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they are responsible to themselves for their belief. To analyse their belief is to know themselves, which is the greatest study of man. . . .

“There is one thing that man is ignorant of. It is this: that he is a sufferer from his own belief, not knowingly, but by his own consent. Not being intelligent enough to judge of cause and effect, he becomes the victim of his own free will. . . . When a person tells you anything which you cannot understand, you are not bound to believe it unless you please; but, if you do, you convict yourself of a crime which you have acknowledged right. Our belief cannot alter a scientific truth, but it may alter our feelings for happiness or misery. Disease is the misery of our belief, happiness is the health of our wisdom, so that man’s happiness or misery depends on himself. Now, as our misery comes from our belief, and not from the thing believed, it is necessary to be on the watch, so as not to be deceived by false guides. Sensation contains no intelligence or belief, but is a mere disturbance of the matter called agitation, which produces mind,<sup>1</sup> and is ready to receive the seed of error. Ever since man was created, there has been an element called error which has been busy inventing answers for every sensation. . . .”

“What is disease? This question involves much speculative reasoning. Some suppose that disease is something independent of man, some think it is a punishment from God for the wrongs of our first parents, others that it comes from disobeying the laws of God. Now let us analyse all the above, and see if there is any truth in these statements. If there was not a living thing

<sup>1</sup> That is, it produces an effect on mind.

on earth, there could not be any disease, or, otherwise, disease must have had an existence before man was created; and, if so, God created it for some purpose. According to man's reasoning, disease is his enemy; and if God created an enemy to destroy man, then God cannot be man's friend, as is thought. Thus the idea that a benevolent God had anything to do with disease is superstition. Then the question comes up again, Where does it come from? I answer, It does not come: it is created, not by God, but by man. . . .

"Disease is false reasoning. True scientific wisdom is health and happiness. False reasoning is sickness and death. On these two modes of reasoning hang all our happiness and misery. The question is, How can we know how to separate the one from the other? The truth cannot be changed: the false is always changing. The one is science: the other is error, and our senses are attached to the one or the other. One is the natural development of [spiritual] matter, or mind; and disease is one of the natural inventions of error. To show how disease is not what it is supposed to be by those who use the word, I must show the absurdity of error's reasoning; for error is the father of disease. We are all taught by this error to call disease something that is independent of man.

"To make it more plain and show where the two modes of reasoning act, I will suppose a case, and take that of a young man who, feeling a little disturbed, calls on a physician. The physician sounds his lungs, examines his heart, and tells the patient he is very liable to have the heart disease. The patient asks him how he got it, and is told that he is liable to catch disease and have it; for it is not a part of him, and to get it or have it or catch



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it is to admit that it exists independent of himself, and, though the patient be dead, yet it would exist the same, and others would be liable to get it.

“At last the patient really has the heart disease which his physician described to him. Now, has he created it himself, or has the doctor created it for him? I propose to show that he has made what the world calls heart disease himself, without any one’s help. To show how a building is raised is to frame one, and then take it down again. So I will take down this building, heart disease, which this man has raised; and then he can see how ideas are made or raised. I will say to the patient, You have built the disease yourself in your sleep or ignorance. This he cannot understand. So I tell him how he has worked in his sleep,<sup>1</sup> and made the very edifice, heart disease, that he has got. I begin to tell him his dream by telling how he feels, in which he admits I am correct.

“Now, when he was asleep or ignorant of the feelings that disturb him, behold, a spirit in the form of a doctor sat by him; and, lo! and behold, he called up from the dead a person with the heart disease, as he called it. And he handled you; and your sleep departed from you, your limbs became cold and clammy, and your pulse quickened. This excited your brain, and at last a figure of a person arose like unto the one you saw in your dream. Then you were afraid, and you awoke in your fright. At last the image became more terrible, till at length it overshadowed you and became a part of yourself, so that, when you awoke, you looked, and, lo! and behold, the dream had become reality, and you had the

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<sup>1</sup> That is, the disease has been developed subconsciously.

heart disease. Now whose was it, the doctor's or yours? Did you catch the doctor's, or did you create it yourself by your own reasoning in your sleep or ignorance, according to the pattern set you by the doctor? I say, you made it yourself.

"Now to cure you, or take down the building, is to show you that all the feelings that you had at the commencement arose from a trifling cause, and that, when I can make you understand it, I have performed the cure. Instead of giving medicine or going to work by guess to destroy the building, I commence by showing the patient how he framed it by his own hand or wisdom. So I reason in this way: You listened to the doctor to try to understand what caused the heart disease. He explained every variety of feeling or symptom, and you listened till you understood it. Now, without knowing it, you created in your mind the disease, as much as you would if an artist or mechanic had taught you how to draught a building, and you would carry in your mind the building, and in your sleep you created it. The only difference would be that one would please you, for it would contain wisdom; while the other would bind you, for it would contain fear, and would threaten to destroy your life. Your trouble is the material with which to build the building or disease. A chemical change in the fluids of your system takes place, and you condense them into a phenomenon corresponding with your draught. The fluids become diseased, and your ingenuity in manufacturing the disease has been the destruction of your happiness. To destroy the disease, I convince you that what the doctor said was an idea gotten up by error, not knowing how to account for some little disturbance which in itself amounted to nothing.

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But by the doctor's mode of reasoning about what he knew nothing, you were led astray into the darkness of heathen superstition where all kinds of evil spirits and diseases dwell in the brain of man. Superstition always shows itself through the ignorance of man's reasoning, assuming as many names and forms as the father of all lies, the devil, or the error of mankind."<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Quimby understood so clearly that man's happiness and misery depend on his "belief," that he could penetrate to the centre of a patient's trouble without fear. Knowing that in part the mind is "matter" and can be changed, and also knowing that he possessed a "Wisdom" which could not change, he was master of the situation, and could clearly separate all that was eternal in man from the changing beliefs of fear and ignorance.

Without asking any questions of the patient, he would discover intuitively how the person had been deceived, and by giving the true explanation would produce a change in the "spiritual matter," or mind. As the foregoing quotations show, he described the sick person as one in prison, held in ignorance or darkness, like the rosebud trying to come forth to the light; and it was his mission to enter these dark prisons of ignorance and superstition, quicken the intelligence of his patient, and set the prisoner free.

"The mind," he says in one of his articles, "is under the direction of a power independent of itself; and, when the mind or thought is formed into an idea, the idea throws off an odour: this contains

<sup>1</sup> 1864.

the cause and effect." This mental atmosphere, or odour emanating from the spiritual matter, was sufficient to tell Mr. Quimby all he wished to know about the patient's trouble; and, when he had discovered the hidden cause, a short audible explanation was often all that was necessary to produce a marked effect.

For instance, he told one young man, who was a very strong Calvinist Baptist, that his religion was killing him; for he saw that the young man was so intense in his narrowing belief that he was shutting all his energies into one channel, and cramping his whole life in an eager effort to realise his spiritual ideal.

But if this changing mind, or "spiritual matter," contains no intelligence, and can be moulded by the opinions and fears which cause man's misery, like clay in the hands of the potter, there must be some abiding principle in man which gives him a permanent identity. This abiding self Mr. Quimby called the "real man," or "the senses," seldom using the word "soul."

Here, too, Mr. Quimby's theory was wholly original; and this was his most suggestive discovery. His ability to detect the mental atmosphere or odour emanating from a patient was not limited by space; for he very early discovered that he could detect such atmospheres, thoughts, mental odours, and feelings at a distance of many miles from his patients, and that he could heal them at a distance. This led to the discovery that "the

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senses" could act independently of the body, and that the five natural senses, or the occasional medium of "the spiritual senses," embraced but a small part of man's perceptions: in short, that "the senses" are, like light, a universal substance, an attribute of God, which we use, just as in displaying genuine wisdom we partake of the very nature of that Wisdom which transcends all definition. We therefore turn to a consideration of Mr. Quimby's theory of man.

## CHAPTER IV

### QUIMBY'S THEORY OF MAN

**M**AN, according to Mr. Quimby, possesses spiritual powers which function independently of matter and are capable of hearing, seeing, smelling, and communicating thoughts and feelings without the aid of physical functions. In fact, man could exist with all his faculties, even if the body were laid aside; and "his happiness is in knowing that he is no part of what is seen by the eye of opinion." Life, or the invisible reality, is the real "substance"; and man's life embraces all his faculties. Many of our perceptions and experiences really take place through the activity of this spiritual self, acting side by side with the natural; for, in the last analysis, "the senses [the spiritual self] are all there is of a man."

It is interesting to note that at the present time many students of psychic science are reaching this same conclusion, in part, which Mr. Quimby reached so long ago; namely, that the facts of clairaudience, clairvoyance, telepathy, and the ability to heal mentally at a distance prove the existence of a part of us which can live and act independently of matter.

This "spiritual identity" was to Mr. Quimby the

real man or life, who dwelt in the real or "scientific" world, in contrast to the natural identity or man of opinions which Wisdom could destroy. "All the senses are life," he said, "not death, and their existence does not depend on a body for their identity. . . . We cannot teach any one to see or taste, smell or know; but all these faculties are independent of matter, and matter is the medium for these faculties to act upon."

He therefore affirmed that "there is no matter independent of mind or life." While, then, he never denied the existence of matter, he sometimes spoke of it as an "idea," which, like language, is used to convey some meaning to another. A sensation coming from matter contains no intelligence, in his view, but the intelligence is in us; and if we put a false construction on it we suffer the consequences. Whereas, if we possess "the true science of life," our interpretation is "scientific, and our happiness is in our wisdom."

He looked upon matter as the condensation or embodiment of some idea, on the one hand, giving expression to the purpose of the invisible Wisdom, or God; and, on the other, revealing some state in the mind of man. He often spoke of man as "matter," meaning, of course, the mind that can be changed. But, whenever he considered man from the point of view of intelligence, he referred to "the senses," or the real man, of which matter is merely a medium.

The real man, or "the senses," may either be

enslaved by the world's opinions, as in the case of disease and false ideas about religion—in which case Mr. Quimby sought to free man's consciousness from bondage to matter—or "his senses may be attached" to the Wisdom which is superior to matter and opinion. In any case, wherever the thought or consciousness is concentrated, there "the senses are attached"; and, if they are free from all slavery to opinion, the man is ready to realise "the science of life and happiness," to separate the truth from the error, and to destroy superstition wherever he finds it.

Man, to know himself, then, according to Mr. Quimby, must push his analysis farther than the mere discovery that he leads a life of mind; and, unless one stops to consider what Mr. Quimby meant by the word "mind," one is not likely to understand his theory of disease. One of Mr. Quimby's followers adopted the term "mortal mind" for the changeable part of our mental life; but this expression was given a misleading significance, owing to the fact that the Quimby theory was not fully understood. Both Mr. Quimby and his interpreter saw the need of distinguishing between the mutable and the immutable mind. Both saw that man lives an essentially mental life. But it would be a hasty and ill-considered inference to leap to the conclusion, "All is mind, there is no matter."

Mr. Quimby did not undertake to formulate a theory of the natural world in detail. Its prime significance for him was that it manifested the



goodness and wisdom of God. It was no part of God's purpose in our natural existence that man should have disease. God does not "send" or "inflict" suffering upon us. Man is ignorant not only of God's purpose, but of the character of his natural life. Consequently, when pain arises, he attributes it to a cause outside of himself, as if he had nothing to do with it. Man is also ignorant of the fact that he possesses a dual nature. Therefore he fails to distinguish between the self that is a victim of ignorance and opinion, and the self that is capable of discerning the wisdom of God.

To discover that opinions, fears, mental pictures, descriptions of disease, and emotional states so work upon the mind as subconsciously to sow "seeds of error" in it was, for Mr. Quimby, to learn that a part of man's nature is essentially changeable. This discovery was momentous for Mr. Quimby, since so much depended for him on the hidden processes of our mental life. His use of the term "matter" in connection with his account of these processes was perhaps unfortunate, for it seemed to imply (1) either that mind is really matter, or (2) that "all is mind." But to him there was no ambiguity, since "spiritual matter" was neither matter nor mind in the usual sense of those terms. The true mind was intimately related to the omnipresent Wisdom. That which man ordinarily deems his true self is "the natural man of opinion." The natural mind is in part subconscious, hence its deeper processes are comparable with the hidden life of vegetation.

With these processes the entire life of the body is connected.

With the organic processes of the body Mr. Quimby was very little concerned. His attention was largely devoted to the phenomena of the intermediate realm between mind and matter, and the hidden influences which cause man's trouble. He placed very little stress upon man's conscious part in the development of disease and other troubles. But he believed if man could be brought to consciousness of the subtle influences of his mental environment a different mode of life would result. Hence his teachings tended to the conclusion that the whole activity of the inner life can be brought within our control. If it is through ignorance of what we truly are, and what influences us, that we have caused our misery, through right belief and right conduct we can become free. To see that we are largely creatures of opinion, belief, creed, dogma, is to discover that by proving all things before we believe we can become men of wisdom and power.

Mr. Quimby's statements were clothed in the language of his own experience, and his criticisms were addressed to the people of his own time. But, allowing for all peculiarities of speech and the conditions of forty years ago, his teaching marked out the main lines of a permanently profitable inquiry into the hidden phases of man's life. Without the discovery of the little-known phenomena of mental influence, his theory and practice would have been impossible. Without considerable preliminary

acquaintance with corresponding phenomena, his theory of mental life and of disease is scarcely intelligible to the present-day inquirer. Allowing for differences in terminology, the mental-healing theories of his followers have followed essentially the same lines. The terms now used are much more intelligible, largely owing to the fact that so much more is known about the hidden processes on which he placed so much stress. It is doubtful, however, if any recent devotee of the mental-healing doctrine possesses either the keenness of insight or the scientific interest which guided Mr. Quimby. It is still to Mr. Quimby, then, that one turns to discover the most profitable lines of investigation.

Taking their cue from the emphasis put upon the power of thought, recent devotees of the mind-cure doctrine have tended towards a shallow individualism. Having learned that man is a victim of opinions, fears, and beliefs, they contend that he may attain his rightful estate by "claiming" everything that is his own. From "claims" in regard to health they have passed to affirmations concerning wealth, success, and manifold other things. This application of Mr. Quimby's proposition, "Whatever we believe, that we create," should not be attributed to the parent teacher. According to Mr. Quimby, it was the natural man whose life is moulded by belief. The moral of Mr. Quimby's discovery is not self-affirmation but the profoundest self-understanding. Man has long tended to circulate about his own little collection of beliefs. To free him

from that bondage, Mr. Quimby directed man's attention to his true self. Now that true self is not mental but spiritual. It is as a son of God that one should go forth to practise the new principles, not as an agent of mere thought.

Far more important than the discovery that man is susceptible to manifold hidden influences and tends to build his own little world of beliefs from within, is the fact that man is recipient of a higher wisdom and superior power. The discovery of these subtle influences enabled Mr. Quimby to explain disease to his own satisfaction, but this knowledge was not sufficient to produce the remarkable cures without which Mr. Quimby would never have been heard of. It was the intuition which the study of mental phenomena brought to light, the spiritual sense, coupled with the power it brought, that made the cures possible. That man is spiritual and possesses spiritual senses is of far more consequence than the proposition that "mind is spiritual matter." That the spiritual man can become open to and use spiritual power is of more consequence still; for that means that man is not to follow his own inclinations, but to pursue Wisdom's way.

Therefore the fundamental consideration for Mr. Quimby was the existence of the omnipresent Wisdom, the God of peace and goodness, who created man to be sound and sane. The second great principle was that of the Christ within, or the principle of divine sonship. Just as Jesus fulfilled the Father's will so long ago, so may we co-operate with

the Power that is ever with us, but has long been despised and rejected. Hence each of us is to discover the true God within our own consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Quimby had little fellowship with the God of man's belief. He found that this God differed just as man's opinions differ; in short, that he was simply "the embodiment of man's belief," and inspired fear, hatred, and anger, and was the source of much of the superstition which he had to combat in effecting a cure. Penetrating deeper into the heart of life, he identified God with the attributes of love, wisdom, and peace which lift man from the depths of superstition and make him more than human. He wrote of God as the first cause, but more especially as the immanent life of man, the power behind the senses, the love that stirs in the hearts of the people, and is ever ready to help those who are in need.

He therefore took no credit to himself for any unusual power. He was a most unassuming man. The element of self and self-esteem is wholly lacking in his writings, as it was in his life and his practice. Instead, there is this larger self, this Wisdom which belongs to all, as it was most surely a vital factor in all that he wrote and did. He stood for certain great principles, and sought the truth without regard to personal inclinations, letting its light shine through him and through his words—an evidence alike of its power and of its high origin.

<sup>1</sup> See the exposition of this doctrine by W. F. Evans, *The Divine Law of Cure*, p. 79.

So convinced was he that the same power which he used with such effect was latent in all minds that he believed every man could become his own physician, and apply "the science of life" in the cure of disease. He prophesied that the time would come "when men and women should heal all manner of diseases by the word of their mouth." He thoroughly believed that all disease could be overcome, since "it was the product of ignorance and superstition, and never had any foundation except in opinion."

He testified of himself that he "had passed from death unto life," for he spoke of his "science" as eternal life, comparing it to the truth taught by Jesus. He declared that the fear of death was also an enemy or opinion which held man in bondage. Not only believing, but understanding, that man had an "identity independent of matter" which made him a part of the eternal life, he looked upon human life as continuous. He said he could conceive of no beginning and no ending, and looked upon death as a change only, which did not affect the real man, or the soul.

In an article dated March, 1861, Mr. Quimby says:

"Man is always dying and living in progression; for error, or opinion, must always be in the mind, and mind must always exist till time is no more. Man is made of science and ignorance, or life and death. Man, seen by the senses, is the centre of our belief; and the senses are attached to the idea called man. So the idea man

varies as much as one star differs from another. No two men or ideas are alike. . . . Man lives all his life subject to death, so that to destroy one idea called death he is liable to die again and again to the end of time, unless his wisdom destroys death by the science of life. The last enemy to science is death, so the scientific man, or idea, shall reign till all error is destroyed. . . .

“Man’s life is a life of progression governed by science or error, and to know what makes happiness is to know what makes misery. The science of life is to know how to keep man from getting into death, or error. This is my theory: to put man in possession of a science that will destroy the ideas of the sick, and teach man one living progression of his own identity, with life free from error and disease. As man passes through these combinations, they differ one from another. . . . He is dying and living all the time to error, till he dies the death of all his opinions or beliefs. Therefore, to be free from death is to be alive in truth; for sin, or error, is death, and science, or wisdom, is eternal life, and this is the Christ.”

In an article on the senses, Mr. Quimby explains his theory that man’s true senses are “spiritual,” and potentially free from the body. He says, in part:

“I have spoken of the senses as something that can exist independent of our natural body. This is new to the world, or it has never been admitted; for the senses are attached to and a part of the body, and the idea of their being separated is something that has not dawned

on the intelligence of the world. It may be a belief among some persons, but it is not admitted among the scientific. To have a knowledge of this science is to know when an impression is produced on the senses.

"The senses contain no knowledge of themselves. When a sensation is produced on them, if the soul, or identity, is aware of it and knows its true meaning, it does not produce the same sensation as though the soul were ignorant of the true meaning. . . . I believe matter to be nothing but an idea belonging to the senses.<sup>1</sup>

". . . The senses of themselves do not embrace any idea of good or bad, but are simply the act of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling. All these are independent of knowledge, for the beast and child contain them. Mesmerism proves the life of all of them independent of the body.<sup>2</sup> So I set them down as senses, not matter, or mind, but life, or the medium of the soul. . . ."

In another article on the senses, Mr. Quimby asks:

"Are our senses mind? I answer, No. . . . Mind and senses are as distinct as light and darkness; and the same distinction holds good in wisdom and knowledge, Jesus and Christ. Christ, wisdom, and [spiritual] senses are synonymous. So likewise are Jesus, knowledge, and mind. Our life is in our senses; and, if our wisdom is in our mind, then we attach our life, wisdom, senses, etc., to matter. But, if our wisdom is attached to

<sup>1</sup> That is, matter is a means of expression for the soul.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Quimby refers to experiences like those attributed to his subject, Lucius, in the account given in the foregoing chapters.



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science [or that which is spiritual], then our life and senses are in God, and not in matter; for there is no matter in God, or wisdom, but matter is the medium of wisdom. . . .

“ . . . The idea [disease] is matter; and it decomposes, and throws off an odour that contains all the ideas of the person affected. This is true of every idea or thought. Now, my odour<sup>1</sup> comes in contact with this odour; . . . and I, being well, have found out by twenty years' experience that these odours affect me, and also that they contain the very identity of the patient whom this odour surrounds. This called my attention to it; and I found that it was as easy to tell the feelings or thoughts of a person sick as to detect the odour of spirits from that of tobacco. I at first thought I inhaled it, but at last found that my [spiritual] senses could be affected by it when my body was at a distance of many miles from the patient. This led to a new discovery; and I found my senses were not in my body, but that my body was in my senses. My knowledge located my senses just according to my wisdom. If a man's knowledge is in matter, all there is of him [to him] is contained in matter. But, if his knowledge is in wisdom, then his senses and all there is of him are out of matter.”

The following quotations are taken from a number of manuscripts on “Man,” “Wisdom,” and “The Christ”:

“As man knows himself, he learns that all he is is life. His senses are in his life. Opinions are mind, subject

<sup>1</sup> That is, Mr. Quimby intuitively discerns the inner state of the individual, both mental and physical.

to his life. His life embraces all his faculties, and his happiness is in knowing that he is no part of what is seen by the eye of opinion. . . . All that is seen by the natural man is mind reduced to a state called matter.<sup>1</sup>  
 . . . Man is just as large as he is wise in science.  
 . . . When man speaks of himself as a man, he is matter; but, when he speaks a scientific truth, he is out of matter, and so far equal to God.

"Is man spirit or matter? Neither. Then what is he? He is life. What are his attributes? A knowledge of himself as a living, thinking, seeing, and moving being. . . . Then what is this body that we see? A tenement for man to occupy when he pleases; but, as a man knows not himself, he reasons as though he were one of the fixtures of his house, or body. . . . We do not think or know that all there is of us is our wisdom, and [that] happiness and misery is what follows our belief. If we had no belief, we should either be fools or wise men. So a belief makes neither, but [makes] a man of error, or matter that can be changed. All of these faculties are out of the idea body but one, that is, error."<sup>2</sup>

"We often speak of man's identity as though there were but one identity attributed to him. This is not the case. Man has as many identities<sup>3</sup> as he has opinions, and the one his senses are attached to last is the one that governs him. Now, this may seem strange; but, nevertheless, it is true. Our [spiritual] senses are not our identity, because they cannot change; for they are

<sup>1</sup> This is one of the ambiguous sentences sometimes taken to mean that "all is mind."

<sup>2</sup> 1861.

<sup>3</sup> That is, selves or types of consciousness.

principles. But our belief, thoughts, and opinions can change; for they are matter. So, when we say a person never changes, it is as much as to say he is nothing but a brute; for he really denies the principles of progression, because he does not admit such a thing as change.

“Perfect wisdom embraces every idea in existence; and, therefore, every idea that comes to the light through the senses existed before to Wisdom. Every person who was, or ever will be, existed as much before he ever came to our senses as afterwards. . . . Man’s intelligence is a truth that existed before he took form or was seen by the natural eye. . . . The real man is never seen by the natural senses; but the real man makes himself known through science . . . as a person who knows a fact, and can teach it to another. . . .”<sup>1</sup>

“We have not a true idea of God. God is not a man any more than man is a principle. When we speak of God, we are taught to believe in a person. So we attach our senses to a person called God, and then talk about His laws, and the violation of them is our trouble. . . . The Christian’s God is a tyrant of the worst kind. God is the name of man’s belief. . . . The God of the savages is their belief, the God of the Mohammedans is their belief, and so on, to the Christian’s God. . . .

“Man has invented a God according to his belief, so that God is the embodiment of man’s belief. As man’s belief changes, so his God changes; but the true God never changes. The wisdom of man condensed into a being called God is set up for the ignorant to worship; . . . and we have revered and worshipped it not from love, but from fear. . . . The true God is not acknowledged by this man’s God, but is in the hearts of

<sup>1</sup> 1865.

the people working like leaven till it leavens the whole lump.

"To believe in this God is to know ourselves, and that is the religion of Christ. It is Christ in us, not opinions we are in. Just as we know this truth, we are of and a part of God, . . . and will be guided by the Father of all truth. This purifies and cleanses our minds from all opinions, and leads us into the world of science where opinions never come. Then one man shall not lead us by his opinions; but, if one says, 'Here is the truth,' let him prove it. This raises man to a higher self-respect; and if man does not respect himself he cannot complain if others do not respect him. . . . This something [God] is what the world of opinions reasons about. . . . It has always been in the world, or in man's belief; but man knows it not. It has no place in men's hearts nor in the religious world except as an unexplained mystery. It comes to man's senses, but man knows it not. It stands knocking at the door, but is not recognised as having an identity. So it is mocked at, spit upon, hated, and despised by all men. Yet it is always the same, calm and unmoved, sympathising with its friends, who are bound down by opinions of this world's belief. . . .

"Now, what is it? It is an invisible Wisdom, which never can be seen by the eye of opinion, any more than truth can be seen by error. . . . It is the key that unlocks the innermost secrets of the heart. . . . It is in the prison of man's belief, and it leads the prisoner who has been bound captive, to health. . . . It is a Wisdom which fills all space, whose attributes are all light, all goodness and love, which is free from all selfishness and hypocrisy, which makes or breaks no laws, but

lets man work out his own salvation, which has no laws and restrictions, sanctions all men's acts according to their belief, and holds them responsible for their belief, right or wrong, without respect to persons.

"This Wisdom teaches man that, when our senses are attached to opinions of any kind, we become the subject of that opinion, and suffer according to the penalty attached to it, unless forgiven, or the debt paid by the truth. This is the new truth spoken of by Jesus. To know this is to have eternal life; and the life is the Wisdom that can enter the dark prisons of man's mind, find his life imprisoned by the opinions of this world, hear his groans, feel his sorrows, break the prison walls of his belief, and set him free."<sup>1</sup>

"Jesus always wished to make a difference in regard to his opinions and what he knew as a science. To show how he separated himself as Jesus the man of opinions from Christ the scientific man, it was necessary to show something as proof."<sup>2</sup> So the sick was the problem to be solved. This separation was a mystery to the people: their superstition was called into action, and, instead of listening to Jesus when he talked the Christ, or truth, they attributed his works to a power from God; and all the cures were taken as proof of that fact. If the people believed he came from God, it was useless to know how he cured; for, if they knew this, it would destroy the belief that he came from God, and so overthrow their religion. Therefore, the leaders laboured to prove to

<sup>1</sup> August, 1861.

<sup>2</sup> By "Christian Science," then, as Mr. Quimby used the term, was meant the applied knowledge of the Christ principle which was exemplified in the life and teachings of Jesus. This "science" is capable of universal proof.

the people that Jesus had a mission from heaven to save souls, and the cures which he performed were only to prove that he came from God."<sup>1</sup>

"This same Christ which you crucify by your theories is the same that Jesus taught eighteen hundred years ago. It was taught by the prophets of old, and has always been in the world, but has never been applied to the curing of disease, although false Christs have arisen and deceived the people, and the true Christ has been crucified by the priest and doctor to this time.

"The natural world is full of figures that may illustrate man's belief. The silkworm spins out his life, and, wrapping himself in his labour, dies. The infidel and brutal man reason that they do the same. The caterpillar is a good illustration of the natural man groping in the dark, guided by a superior wisdom that prompts his acts. When his days are numbered, wrapped in the mantle of this earth, he lies down to sleep the sleep of death; but the wisdom that brings forth the butterfly also develops its science. In order that truth may come forth, error must be destroyed; and science, groping in darkness, bursts into light, and rises from the dead as the butterfly, not the caterpillar.

"All men have sinned, or embraced beliefs. So all must die to their belief. Disease is a belief: health is in wisdom. So, as man dies to his belief, he lives in wisdom. My theory is to destroy death, or belief, and bring life and wisdom into the world. Therefore, I come to the sick, not to save their beliefs, or life in disease, but to destroy it. And he that loseth his life for wisdom will find his health, or life."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> March, 1861.

<sup>2</sup> 1865.

It is plain that these are the thoughts of a man who made little use of books and depended upon his own observations and insight. His writings are, in fact, almost entirely limited to accounts of his own experiences and conclusions, interspersed here and there with references to the Civil War, which was in progress when he wrote. He often changed his subject when half-way through an article, or introduced a prophecy concerning the war.

He is concerned throughout with the actual course of events in human life, the dual nature of man, and the directions of mind which resistlessly bring happiness or misery, according to the nature of man's belief. He emphasises the fact again and again that action and reaction are equal, and that man is, therefore, responsible for his happiness and misery. He therefore believes that everything in life is law-governed.

In summarising his theory of man, the most important consideration is the law of progress, as Mr. Quimby apprehended it: "Man is a progressive being." Into his life has entered a higher element or power, which Mr. Quimby often speaks of as the feminine or spiritual element, while man is of the earth, earthy. The two are in conflict, the two are present in every man. And, since man begins life an epitome of creation, "with all the elements of the material world," "it is not strange that phenomena should appear, while man is so ignorant of what he is composed of, which can be traced to the animal kingdom with which they are most identi-

fied." These conflicts or diseases Mr. Quimby called "progressive action"; and, if man understood that his life was a progressive process, or evolution, he would be free from or superior to these conflicts through his science or wisdom.

Conduct, then, following the example and teaching of Mr. Quimby, would involve wise adjustment to the conditions of progress, so that they will not bring friction, and a recognition of this higher element which is trying to come forth.

Throughout his writings there is a sense of repose, based on firm conviction, which shows how strong was his ideal of health and happiness, how clear his understanding of life's actual conditions.

There is an entire lack of that enthusiasm and excitement which characterises many of those who are interested in mental healing to-day. With him there was no straining after ideals, no overdrawn assertions. He was eminently practical, and devoted to the needs of the living present.

His philosophy teaches one to recognise what actually exists here and now, since God is not somewhere afar off, but immanent in His world of manifestation and in the soul. It is theory and practice, philosophy and life, religion and life combined. Although especially applied by Mr. Quimby to the healing of the sick and the instruction of those who cared to converse with him about his ideas, his theory is sufficiently comprehensive to be a guiding factor in every moment of life. It inculcates a mode of life rather than a mere method of healing.



No single article, nor all that Mr. Quimby wrote, does this theory full justice; for to those who knew him, and who received the direct benefit of his work, his own life was far larger and nobler than anything he wrote. One who has some acquaintance with this more personal element, therefore, turns from the written page to the large, unselfish, and deeply original nature behind it, as to one whose privilege it was to be of unusual benefit to humanity, and to utter words of wisdom and perform acts of love that are rarely equalled. If Mr. Quimby was unable to complete his "science of life and happiness," he at any rate gave a great impetus to others, and this personal inspiration is perhaps the greatest blessing a man can bestow upon his fellows.

## CHAPTER V

### THE FIRST TEACHERS

**A**SIDE from his suggestive theories in regard to the nature of man, the peculiar merit of Mr. Quimby's work was briefly this: Having observed the influence of mind in the production and healing of disease, he did not stop with that discovery, but, single-handed and amidst opposition from the regular physicians, persisted in his inquiries until he worked out a system whose truth he proved by healing disease in its worst forms. All who are familiar with the medical theories and methods of a half-century ago will appreciate what that victory means. They will see that no one could win such a triumph unless inspired by unusual love of humanity and by keen originality of thought. Others will, perhaps, see in this work evidences of divine guidance, the working out, in the fitness of time, of providential methods for the relief of human suffering. For our present purposes, the general theory developed by Mr. Quimby may be summarised under the following heads:

(1) Human life is mental rather than physical. Until brought to consciousness, man lives largely in the world of his own beliefs, fears, opinions,

emotions; he finds what he seeks, tends to create for himself what he believes. This mental world is not limited to the sphere of conscious life, but is intimately related with the great realm of subconsciousness. This deeper part of his mental life is, in turn closely related with the organic life of the body, and with the hidden social influences which unite him with his fellows. The particular significance of this theory is the basis it affords for the description and explanation of diseases in the light of its inmost origin and cure. The theory involves no denial of facts, but special emphasis is put upon the subtler influences of the inner life.

(2) But man is not merely a mental being: he is not alone subject to opinions and beliefs; he is also a soul, an inhabitant of a higher order of existence. As an immortal soul there is not only a part of his nature that is never ill, that never sins, but he possesses higher faculties which function independently of the physical senses. Through these superior functions man is able to become receptive to a greater power than that of the flesh, or the mind in its ordinary operations. Man is also the recipient of a superior wisdom. Guided by this wisdom, and using this power, he is able to accomplish that which seems impossible from the usual point of view. Thus the activities of the inner life are gradually brought into control, and the problems of health and disease become problems of the individual, problems of temperament and self-mastery.

(3) When sitting silently by a sick person, one

who is acquainted with these superior powers is able intuitively to discover the inmost cause of the patient's trouble, and bring to bear the power of the spirit to heal the flesh. The process of cure does not alone consist in sitting in silence by the sufferer, but includes intimate understanding of the patient's case, an explanation of the disease, and of the principles involved in its cure. The silent method of cure now widely practised is the direct outcome of the mode of treating the sick which Mr. Quimby acquired through many years of work.

(4) Thus "the explanation is the cure" in a much larger sense than at first appears. What seems to be a rather shallow notion concerning disease, namely, that it is "the creation of man through false reasoning," proves to be merely a preliminary statement which arouses a desire to investigate. The physical conditions of disease are not denied, but it is found that much depends upon the beliefs and attitudes with which they are met. Granted the proper knowledge of the painful sensations and the inner causes, together with the wisdom needed to meet them, an entirely different result is created out of incipient tendencies to disease. To know how disease is erected out of a few materials is to know how to build its opposite, health. Thus the science of disease, regarded from its mental side, becomes the basis of "the science of health." But the power of mind in health and disease is merely the introductory subject. The whole outlook on life is changed with the discovery that so much

depends upon our initiatory attitudes and beliefs. The deeper interests concern man's social and religious life. To break away from bondage to physicians and medicine is to begin to break away from servitude to all that is material,—to discover another mode of life and thought. The impetus which Mr. Quimby gave his patients was, therefore, one that led to a new spiritual interest and a life work.

Time has shown that the essentially novel feature of Mr. Quimby's work and teaching was the method of making concretely practical the great truths of idealistic philosophy and religion. That the spiritual world is nigh unto the natural, that God is immanent in His world, had long been believed by the enlightened. But that one could so realise the presence of the spiritual in the natural, so draw upon the resources which spring from the divine immanence as to heal all kinds of disease by a consciously directed process, which could afterwards be described and reduced to principles which all could understand—this was a proof of philosophic and spiritual truth which was new to the world. When all has been said to belittle this accomplishment as much as possible, and bestow credit anywhere but where it is due, this is the achievement without which the mental-healing movement would have been impossible. It required this last and most difficult demonstration of spiritual truth, the healing of physical disease, to establish a practical method which applies to all phases of human life.

The elements of this demonstration had already been discovered. Religious seers and philosophical reasoners had come as near as possible to the practical application of their teachings without actually proving them in this concrete way. It was the work of Mr. Quimby which brought these elements into proper relation and gave men the clue to the real significance of their own beliefs.

Mr. Quimby was a pioneer, a forerunner, and prophet. He worked long enough in his chosen direction to call power there and establish a new interest. Hence he belongs among that small class of original, courageous men who have the persistence to break through a wall of opposition. The power that enabled him to do this had long been gathering in his own life and in his practice with the sick. He expected to do much more than merely to establish the new interest. But, like so many other original men, his earthly life came to an end when the example had been set for his successors to follow. In some respects he was more successful as a worker than as an exponent of his theories, for he undoubtedly possessed greater healing power than those who have come after him. In this, too, he resembled other pioneers, for it usually remains for others to expound and to unfold. Singularly enough he has been subject to the usual misrepresentation. But there were faithful followers, too. The work he hoped to accomplish by revising and publishing his writings others have done. His manuscripts, if published, would now be chiefly

interesting as illustrative of the type of life and work which we are here attributing to him, rather than as adequate accounts of his insight and his service to humanity. Nevertheless, as it is precisely the character of his pioneer work that has been most neglected it is to be hoped that these writings will some time be carefully edited and given to the world.

1. As early as 1857, fairly intelligent accounts of Mr. Quimby's theory and practice began to appear in the newspapers of Maine.<sup>1</sup> The first follower to publish a book on the subject was Rev. W. F. Evans (1817-1889), one of the four exponents of the original theory who have done most to spread the doctrine. The best account of the life and work of Dr. Evans has been recently published in a little leaflet, by Rev. W. J. Leonard,<sup>2</sup> from which I make the following quotation:

"The modern mental-healing movement which, under the various names of mental science, Christian science, divine science, metaphysics, new thought, and what not, has been of untold service to the world, originated, let it never be forgotten, in the investigations, discoveries, and mental-healing practice of Phineas Parkhurst Quimby

<sup>1</sup> Some of these articles were reprinted in *The Philosophy of P. P. Quimby*, chap. ii.

<sup>2</sup> *The Pioneer Apostle of Mental Science*, Boston, 1903. Mr. Leonard has in preparation a more elaborate study of the life and teachings of Dr. Evans, including quotations from early journals, and an account of the spiritual development which prepared Dr. Evans to become "the pioneer apostle."

(1802-1866), of Belfast and Portland, Maine. If he was an 'uneducated man,' as one of his patients, Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy, has recently declared in a public message, he was fortunate enough to be endowed with an original and intuitive mind and a love of truth, which stood him in good stead, and enabled him to lay hold of principles which had hitherto eluded the ken of the educated world of his day. Though he wrote no books, he had formulated those principles sufficiently to communicate a knowledge of them to his disciples.

"Three years before his death, which occurred in January, 1866, a patient came to him in Portland from western New Hampshire who had the training of a scholar and the literary habits of an author and a clergyman. He had, withal, an open and receptive mind, and though, with his other accomplishments, he was versed in medicine, he became at once profoundly interested in the mental-healing theories and methods of Dr. Quimby.<sup>1</sup> This was the Rev. Warren Felt Evans, then of Claremont, who was destined to become the pioneer author and healer in the new school of therapeutics founded by Dr. Quimby.

"Dr. Evans had not been physically sound for many years, having a nervous affection that was complicated with a chronic disorder that bears rather an ominous name in medicine. He heard of the wonderful cures that Dr. Quimby was performing in Maine, and in 1863 he visited him as a patient, as already noted. In fact, he made two visits about this time. The spiritual philosophy in which he believed, together with the

<sup>1</sup> The term "doctor," here applied to Mr. Quimby, simply means that he was a healer. Mr. Quimby was not medically trained.



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intellectual acuteness that belongs to the well-disciplined mind, prepared him to grasp at once the principles of Dr. Quimby's system of healing. So at the close of his second visit, he said to Dr. Quimby, 'I believe that I can heal as you do.' Dr. Quimby promptly replied, 'I think you can.' Up to this time no one of his patients had entertained the thought of being competent to enter upon the healing ministry which Dr. Quimby had then followed for twenty-three years. Dr. Evans, upon returning to his home in Claremont, very soon began his career as a mental practitioner, and found himself perfectly at home in the work.

"He had demonstrated the fundamental principles of mental healing in a practice of six years before he issued his first book on the subject, in 1869. He was an author, however, before he was a healer, having published several books that treated of spiritual themes. His first work on mental healing is called *The Mental Cure*, to which are added on the title-page the descriptive words, 'Illustrating the influence of the mind on the body, both in health and disease, and the psychological method of treatment.' This work has a singular interest as the first one written in support of metaphysical healing, but it has great value also for its profound and scholarly treatment of the subject. In the next six years Dr. Evans published two other books called *Mental Medicine* (1872) and *Soul and Body* (1875) which give a further unfolding of the views of this remarkably suggestive writer. These three books were in circulation before the Christian Science text-books,<sup>1</sup> and all antedate any other book on the subject.

"While Dr. Evans, even in these earlier writings,

<sup>1</sup> The first edition of *Science and Health* was issued in 1875.

made his own contribution to the philosophy and therapeutic methods of mental science, as other eminent writers on the subject have been doing in later years, he from the first recognised his debt to Dr. Quimby, as when he says, in his second publication mentioned above, 'Disease being in its root a wrong belief, change that belief and we cure the disease. By faith we are thus made whole. There is a law here the world will some time understand and use in the cure of the diseases that afflict mankind. The late Dr. Quimby, one of the most successful healers of this or any age, embraced this view of the nature of disease, and by a long succession of most remarkable cures proved the truth of the theory and the efficiency of that mode of treatment. Had he lived in a remote age or country, the wonderful facts which occurred in his practice would have now been deemed either mythical or miraculous. He seemed to reproduce the wonders of the Gospel history.' One who knew Dr. Evans intimately reiterates this sentiment in a letter to the writer of this article, in the following words: 'In his estimation, Dr. Quimby was the highest authority in the science of healing, and a man of noble character and purest aims, which Dr. Evans believed were indispensably necessary to bring one into the perfect peace and the harmony with the Divine Life required to teach or heal the sick and suffering with success.'

"Not only was Dr. Evans fair enough thus to honour his master in the science, but, with the humility and modesty that are characteristic of the truly great soul, he made no attempt to claim that the truths he presented were absolutely new. 'In the present mental-cure system,' he says, 'I know of no principle which is true that is not found in the New Testament and in the true

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spiritual philosophy of all ages and nations.' Much less would he have any one consider his views authoritative beyond all question. He concludes the preface of his first book with words that illustrate his spirit of fairness and freedom from dogmatism. He says, 'It is to be hoped the volume may prove acceptable and useful to all who feel an interest in the imperfectly explored region of human knowledge into which it attempts to penetrate with the light of philosophy. . . . The author claims no infallibility for his opinions and conclusions, but submits them to the candid judgment of all men who love truth for its own sake.'

"This first treatise on the mental-healing science proved to be more acceptable than the author could have possibly anticipated in his most sanguine moments. It found many readers at once, not only in America but in European countries, where it was translated into other languages at an early day.

"Dr. Evans's active and fertile mind produced three other books on the topic that had an absorbing interest to him. The titles in the order of their publication are: *The Divine Law of Cure* (1881), *The Primitive Mind Cure* (1884), *Esoteric Christianity and Mental Therapeutics* (1886). The last two books embody the substance of the author's instruction to his classes.

"These six remarkable books are the permanent contribution of Dr. Evans to the metaphysical healing movement. Their treatment of the subject is practically exhaustive, and it is to be doubted if they are ever altogether superseded by any works that may be written."

It was undoubtedly Dr. Evans's acquaintance with the writings of Swedenborg which enabled him

so readily to grasp and develop the ideas he gained from Mr. Quimby. In addition to his experience as a Christian minister he had long been familiar with the writings of Berkeley and the other idealists. His own intuition and inner spiritual experience also led him to a point where he was prepared to apply his Christian idealism to the healing of disease. But in books like Swedenborg's *Divine Love and Wisdom* there are teachings which lead very directly to the practical method for which Mr. Quimby stood. Dr. Evans only needed to find a man who was actually proving what he had theoretically anticipated in order to accept the entire therapeutic doctrine. Guided by the practical impetus which Mr. Quimby's work gave him, Dr. Evans in course of time worked out a remarkable combination of all these spiritual and philosophical teachings. In his writings one finds a well-reasoned account of what Mr. Quimby meant to say, what he would have said had he possessed all the data as well as a trained mind. For there was remarkable affinity between the two men. To one who has read Mr. Quimby's manuscripts it is a constant satisfaction to note the harmony of thought and unity of purpose in their writings. Although Dr. Evans only once refers to Mr. Quimby, there is nothing he wrote in the six volumes above mentioned that does not directly relate to the Quimby teachings. In the first part of *The Divine Law of Cure*, for example, there is an exposition of the general spiritual principles in which Mr. Quimby

believed, including the distinctions which he drew between Jesus and the Christ. Part II. contains an interpretation of the idealistic implications of the spiritual-healing theory. Here, for instance, one finds Mr. Quimby's theory that the body has no strength or life of its own. After a careful comparison of Mr. Quimby's ideas with the theories there set forth, notably the temperate claims in regard to the power of creative thought, one finds no point in the argument which Mr. Quimby would not have endorsed, except that possibly he would have placed less stress on the imagination.<sup>1</sup> To these illuminating chapters by Dr. Evans I must, therefore, refer the reader for details, facts, and arguments which cannot here be given in sufficient fulness.<sup>2</sup>

2. The relationship of Mrs. Patterson, later Mrs. Eddy, to the pioneer work was sufficiently set forth in the *Arena*, May, 1899; and it does not concern us here. At that time I had temporarily in my possession the letter which Mr. Patterson wrote to Mr. Quimby, in 1862, in which he sought the latter's help for his wife, then an invalid in bed. I also possessed the grateful letters, written by Mrs. Patterson to Mr. Quimby during the years when Mrs. Patterson was entirely loyal; and I have not the least reason to doubt the entire sincerity which the letters expressed. I am confident that at that time the future Mrs. Eddy had never dreamed of

<sup>1</sup> See *The Divine Law of Cure*, p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Leonard's new work on Dr. Evans will also throw light on the details of development of the spiritual-healing theory.

claiming the therapeutic doctrine as her own "revelation"; that she revered Mr. Quimby as the kind, unselfish man who had restored her to health and freely given her his ideas; that she regarded him as a *spiritual* teacher, not "an ignorant mesmerist"; and that the decision to claim all for herself was of much later date, probably as late as 1875.

The work of Julius A. Dresser (1838-1893) began soon after his restoration to health in 1860. His part at first consisted in the explanation of the new "science of life" to inquirers and to Mr. Quimby's patients, among whom was Mrs. Patterson, to whom was loaned the first volume of Mr. Quimby's manuscripts. This volume was written in 1859, and was mainly devoted to the theory of disease, mental influences, and "spiritual matter" as set forth in the preceding chapters. Many of its peculiar expressions might easily be misconstrued. Mr. Quimby's later writings, never seen by Mrs. Patterson-Eddy, are much clearer on the crucial points pertaining to the relationship of mind and matter.

The larger public work of Julius A. and Annetta G. Dresser began in Boston in 1882. At that time the only devotees of the mental-healing doctrine were either followers or pupils of former students of Mrs. Eddy, or devotees of Dr. Evans. The work of my parents was a direct development of Mr. Quimby's theories and methods, as shown by the following quotation from a circular issued in 1884:

"So many persons ask the undersigned what their mode of treatment of the sick is, we feel constrained to

make a brief general answer. It is none of the prevailing 'isms' of the day, but is purely a mental treatment; and its results are a triumph of mind over the ills of suffering humanity, and of the real truth of a sick person's case over the opinions that assume to know when they do not know. No medicines or other material means are used, for the reason that it is natural and right to be well, and the simple truth understood and applied destroys the error of disease. Our examinations are made by mental perceptions [intuition] which reveal the true state of the patient. This mode of practice applies to all cases, and is based upon principles of truth discovered and reduced to a science by P. P. Quimby, of Maine. We learned it of him, personally, and have no name for it except the Quimby System of Mental Treatment of Diseases. But it may properly be termed a spiritual science. Those who are unacquainted with it are asked to judge of it only by its fruits.

"In this enlightened age of the world there is one subject too much neglected, and that is, *man's understanding of himself*. All people have some knowledge of the effect of the mind in health and disease, but there is a wide difference of opinion as to the extent of that effect, and very few persons understand how far its influence goes. This lack of understanding is what we try to meet by our practice and teaching. The only fair judgment that can be formed upon this system is by actual test. The sick and suffering who have failed to find relief are those to whom this subject commends itself for examination.

"There is a truth not generally known, the understanding of which tends to avoid sickness, and leads to health and happiness. It is no man's belief; it is an eternal

truth. We only ask you, if interested, to *prove our words.*”

In the majority of cases, restoration to health meant the awakening of interest to know how the cure was wrought. Hence class lectures soon grew out of the healing practice. The general method of conducting the classes, which usually consisted of twelve lectures, was to begin with the description and analysis of experiences illustrative of mental influence, point out the effect of erroneous opinions and beliefs, and show that in general we “live a life of mind.” Much emphasis, for example, was put on the fact that, in what ever way we turn, it is the direction of mind that is fundamental, crucial. Hence it is necessary to come to judgment, learn the power of thought, see the part played by fear, emotional excitement, unwise expectations, and the like. The second lecture was devoted to a discussion of the divine immanence. This was the most impressive lecture in the course and was of fundamental consequence, as may be surmised from the lecture notes quoted in the following chapter.

The nature of matter was the third topic, and in addition to the reading of brief articles from Mr. Quimby’s manuscripts much evidence was adduced from the idealistic literature of the ages in support of Mr. Quimby’s position.<sup>1</sup> The foundations of an idealistic way of thinking well laid, the influence of the mind on the body was considered in detail; and

<sup>1</sup> Cp. *The Divine Law of Cure*, Part II.



instances were related to illustrate the influence of mind on mind. These instances were, for the most part, drawn from actual practice with the sick. Much stress was laid, for example, on so-called mental atmospheres and the subtle phases of mental life which the therapist discerns while treating the sick. Here, of course, the appeal was wholly empirical, and it was maintained that our mental life is put in a new light by the discovery that we are in a very intimate sense "members one of another."

The next step was to explain the subconscious after-effects of dynamic opinions and beliefs. The way was then clear to bring forward the general mental theory of disease. Here, too, much use was made of Mr. Quimby's manuscripts. There was also constant reference to the New Testament teachings in regard to the healing of disease. The actual description of the process of mental treatment was always the most difficult part of the general exposition. Yet, as nearly every member of the classes had been recently restored to health by the mental method, the appeal to experience was, of course, the most effective way to expound the theory. At best, however, it was found difficult to put into words what must be personally experienced. Usually the theory of mental cure was not proved true in the larger sense of the word until the student had tested it by actual practice with the sick.

The spiritual nature of man was the next topic. In this part of the discussion it was customary to

place considerable stress upon the distinction drawn by Mr. Quimby between Jesus, the historical character, and the Christ, the universal ideal or consciousness. This was deemed an essential distinction because it made clear the possibilities open before every one who is faithful to the guidance of the omnipresent Wisdom. It seemed necessary, too, to dwell on the point so that the beginner would be encouraged to undertake the work of spiritual healing. The distinction did not involve the so-called "denial of the divinity of Christ." It took nothing from Jesus, the prophet of the Christ. To the love of Christ as the elder brother was added the practical conception of the Christ ideal, as the highest standard of service among the sick. Hence to many minds this distinction came with the force of a new revelation.

It was next pointed out that the spiritual life is continuous,—that we already live in eternity. In this connection much was said about the old thought of death, with all the fears associated with it. In order to dispel these fears and establish a new set of expectations, great stress was put upon the fact that the real man is spiritual, the possessor of powers which inseparably unite him with a higher realm of being. Death was thus shown to be, relatively speaking, an external incident. To adopt the thought of "eternity now" was to become poised, calm, free. To realise that our real life is spiritual was to overcome the illusions of sense-experience with its manifold bondages.

The general purpose of these explanations was to produce a consciousness of one's actual situation in life, with all its subtler influences and conditions, then make clear "the wisdom of the situation" by showing the real intent of human experience. It seemed necessary to bring to light the hidden effects of fear, sometimes spoken of as "the backbone of disease," in order to clear the way for the realisation of spiritual ideals. The fear of death was found to be the most persistent of all, hence to displace it by showing that we are already sons of God, members of an eternal order, was in very truth to prepare the way for a new mode of practical life. Thus the discussions gradually enlarged in scope from the relatively superficial considerations in regard to the power of thought to the fundamental principles of a comprehensive spiritual philosophy of life. It was pointed out that the healing of disease was merely preparatory to the larger ideals of Christian living.

The impression produced by the lectures was deeply religious. With the teachers the work of healing had always been part of the consecrated life. Hence it was natural that much stress should be put upon the religious bearings of the general doctrine. For the teachers the restoration to health by spiritual means had meant an entire change in thought and life. To their followers the new teachings seemed no less revolutionary. Their followers became their friends, and out of this new bond came a strong impulse towards practical spiritual living.

To one who had been born and reared in a home where such principles had been the basis of all thought and conduct, so that spiritual help was always the aid sought whether in times of illness or of sorrow, the teachings came with special significance; for they brought the explanation, at last, of that peculiar domestic equation which had long made one aware of a difference between one's home and the homes of people where there was constant worrying and doctoring. To be told in one's youth about "the Christ within," to be taught to seek the guidances of the inner world in every moment of need, is an inestimable privilege in more senses than one. One then grows up not only with the thought of health rather than the fear of disease, the thought of life in place of the dread of death, but with an empirical religious basis free from the encumbrances of dogmatic theology. The philosophy of the immanent God then appeals to the mind, in later life, as a natural consequence of what has already been an experience.

After 1889, the teaching was somewhat modified in the light of recent literature. Much use was made, for example, of such works as *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*, by Joseph Le Conte. The introduction of the philosophy of evolution marked a departure from some of Mr. Quimby's teachings. A further departure was an evolutionary theory of the significance of suffering, the direct outgrowth of the healing practice of Annetta G. Dresser. That disease might have a

deeper spiritual significance in the evolution of man was a thought which Mr. Quimby probably never entertained; for this would imply that suffering bears a relation to the divine purpose, while to Mr. Quimby disease was always "the invention," or was due to the wrong "belief," of man. Nevertheless, this is a more intelligible carrying out of his theory that disease involves a lesson for man, that man is "a progressive being." This theory of suffering in the light of its spiritual significance I have restated in my own terms in *The Power of Silence*, under the title "The Meaning of Suffering." For the most part, that volume is a direct representative of the home life and teachings now in question.

Whatever the modifications through which Mr. Quimby's teachings have passed, the essential interest has persisted, namely, the desire to understand man in his inmost relations. It was natural that a larger terminology should in due time be needed. That "disease is a belief," or an "error of mind," is obviously a very inadequate statement of the case. But that mind, wisdom, is its true cure is a deeply suggestive proposition. For this implies that man is to understand his actual situation in life, penetrate beyond all appearances, and adapt himself to the real, that is, the spiritual, situation. Hence a spiritual philosophy of evolution and adjustment is the logical outcome of such teaching. The problems of ill-health are of one type only. If the fundamental principles are correct, all phases of human life are included. The more the doctrine is

enlarged the more points of connection are discovered with other teachings.

The method of inquiry by which these teachings were developed is well illustrated by the following quotation from the lecture notes of Julius A. Dresser :

“ To understand the theory and practice of this system of mental cure you are not to *believe* something that we tell you, because that would not be understanding, but believing. This mental cure is a science; and a science is something to understand, the same as in mathematics you study and prove a problem. We wish to show you the truth of life by facts and demonstrations of reason and unanswerable proof, not by any beliefs or opinions that we may have; for that would simply make you wise in our conceits, not in the true wisdom. Therefore we wish you to use your intelligence rather than make any effort to remember what is said. You will best understand if you lay aside the prejudices and beliefs hitherto held, so that they may not blind you to what we try to show you, and so that the wisdom within may enable you to discern the truth. And remember that in leading you into the truth we shall not take away from you anything that is good. Some old beliefs are destroyed by this investigation, but it is done by seeing for yourselves that they are wrong.

“ If, as we claim, health is the true state of man, and if this mental cure is the simple truth cure, and man has no need to be either sick or unhappy, why has not this truth been known generations ago, and why is there so much sickness everywhere? The answer may be expressed in one word, Opinion. But you do not see the force of that answer, so I must explain it.

"It is the common habit of men to make up their minds upon a subject according as the matter seems to them individually, each claiming the right to his own opinion. There would be no inherent wrong in this if the opinion were the truth, but it is clear that it is not from the fact that opinions differ, while the truth of the matter is one upon which all would agree if they understood it. Opinion is the stock that all gossip is made of, by which a world of harm is done. It is the basis of religious differences. It is what the doctor gives when by his dictum he dooms your friend to this or that disease or pronounces a person incurable. This is all meant well, and is the best the doctor knows, but the damage that is done, the sorrow that is entailed, and the suffering that is thus caused—the world little dreams how much!

"Now you wish to know what the doctors shall do or say, and what other people shall think and practise. There is one rule for all cases: 'Prove all things.' Do not judge from the *appearance*, but go deeper. Patiently wait; persistently examine, inquire, investigate, charitably do as you would be done by. Do not conclude that you know a thing until you fully know it, fully understand it. The world has always held that people cannot prove all things, although the lessons of life teach us to do it; and believers in the Bible as an authority find there a direct command to do so, which they must admit would not have been put there if it could not be obeyed. . . .

"The status of mankind is this: being born in ignorance and required to work out their own salvation, people have made the natural mistake of judging everything from the appearance. This gave rise in the course of

time to so many beliefs and opinions that these now form largely the doctrines and knowledge of the world in all departments, especially in theology and medicine. These systems of formulated opinions and beliefs are constantly changing, showing that they are not the truth of the subjects they refer to. This truth of the mental cure has always existed, and it has appeared here and there all through the life of mankind. It is lived every day by everybody, more or less, but is not understood; and the reason is because of the error of opinion, in which every one comes to his separate conclusion, without seeking the basis of truth of a matter upon which all must agree. Men search the whole earth for information; they search the Scriptures, and they think with masterly ability, but what do they settle upon? Theories, opinions, in which they differ. Henry Ward Beecher, for instance, with reference to the healing of the sick by Jesus and his disciples, said, that such things were needed then as proofs to a less enlightened age, but are not needed now. Yet there are more sick people now, and a much larger number of diseases. And Jesus said that any man, without reference to time or age of the world, who would understand his doctrines should do his works. . . ."



## CHAPTER VI

### THE OMNIPRESENT WISDOM

WHAT may we know of God ?<sup>1</sup> "Nothing," says Herbert Spencer; "He is the Unknowable." Then He does not exist, for whatever we cannot have some slight actual knowledge of has no existence, so far as we have any evidence, and it is useless to talk about it. "Canst thou by searching find out God, canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" asks Job. It is plain that we cannot. It will take eternity to do that. But we can make a beginning, here and now. We can know something about Him and know it in the same way that we know our own existence.

Some people think it is audacious even to discuss this question. But we have earthly parents whom we love. Is it presumptuous to discuss them, to know them better and to love them more? In many ways we are directed to love God. How are we to love somebody whom we know nothing about, and who is utterly unknowable? Can you love somebody living at the north pole, or on the planet

<sup>1</sup> From the manuscripts of Julius A. Dresser. Reprinted, with revisions, from *The Journal of Practical Metaphysics*, December, 1896.

Jupiter? No, because you have no conception of what you are to love. It is inevitable that our love should be drawn out by a definite conception of the one whom we are to love, else the soul is incapable of any such feeling as love toward God or any other object. True love depends, then, upon having some knowledge of its object: especially is it true of an object which no one can see. This is self-evident. What is it that we seek to know,—what is God?

Since people differ so much in their ideas that scarcely any two think alike about God, this question is very difficult to answer. The various opinions of the religious world make God just what each one happens to believe, or imagine. But this shows no actual knowledge, nor has the thought been entertained that God could be felt and to some extent described. The general religious teachings tend to give the child an idea of God as a man. But if God had a form like a man, He would be a limited Being; for a form must have an outline, and therefore limitation. He would then be finite, and this is inconsistent with what we feel Him to be.

I do not need to show that there must be such a Being as God, or the first Cause of this great and glorious universe, who must still be its prime mover and the underlying principle and support of it all. Still, it is a practical consideration to recognise why there must be such a Being.

As we look over the face of nature we observe a universe of established order and system, and at

once we see that some great Intelligence, or first Cause, must have created it and must still govern it. It is evident that the first Cause must be self-existent, uncreated; because if there were not something that is self-existent there would be no basis upon which anything could be created, nor would there be anything to create; and therefore no basis for existence. This something that must be self-existent is God. And there could be but one, because whatever is self-existent must be a part of itself, or a part of the one God, and two would amount to an opposition.

Furthermore, it is evident that God is unchangeable. If He is the highest wisdom and is perfect, then all that He made and established is in the highest wisdom and could not be improved. If it could have been done better, then He did not have the highest wisdom in making it. If, then, He made all things in the highest wisdom, He could not change anything, because that would be against wisdom. He could not change His plan, nor start anything new at any time, because it would then follow that He did not understand enough to include all wisdom in His original plan. Since He is the one eternal, infinite wisdom, including within Himself all that is good, and the sole cause of all that exists, He must have known all things in the beginning, and must have included all wise action in His first plan. Having thus chosen and acted, His plan is completed for all time and cannot be changed. His purpose goes on unfolding and being

enacted through all time, for of course His plan embraces a great deal to be done through His creatures, and they are, therefore, necessary for its accomplishment.

Since, then, this self-existent Power and unchangeable Wisdom is all that exists, it follows that its offspring or creations are emanations from itself, and are, therefore, parts of itself in different orders and degrees. Thus a certain writer is justified in saying that "God cannot know any other self, therefore He knows us as a part of Himself." This first Cause, or God, or Father, is, therefore, the great generative source of all that exists, and this generative power proceeds forth as the Spirit. We have, then, the first Cause, the Spirit, and also the effect or result, since we cannot think of the one Cause without the other two, namely, the proceeding forth and the result.

It will be seen from the foregoing that what God is, what His relations are to each of us, constitutes the vital and fundamental truth of life. For it is evident that we would be nothing whatever without the abiding presence of God. Our next task is to show by further explanation that this first Cause, or God, the Ruler and Father of all, is literally the omnipresent life and mover of every living thing, and to show it so that the reader will not only understand it, but will realise it and its consequences in daily life.

It is evident from the foregoing why Paul asserted that there is "one God and Father of all, who is

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over all and through all and in you all." It is also plain that God is the "all in all," for there could be nothing else but God and His manifestations. Science has shown that all the different kinds of force are but different forms of one omnipresent energy, and this omnipresent energy is and can be no other than the Creator of all living things. "In a word," says Professor Le Conte, "there is no real efficient force but Spirit, and no real independent existence but God, *in* whom, in the most literal sense, not only we but all things have their being; in whom all things consist, through whom all things exist, and without whom there would be and could be nothing."

The idea that some part of God literally exists in the human family has long been a favourite thought with many. But what is the nature of it? What part of you is not yourself, but God? If we can ascertain what it is that is God within, working in and through us, we can give it better control, we can secure better results in our lives and be healed of our diseases. If the universal Father is so near that we *live* in Him, who shall say that we cannot have some slight knowledge of what this omnipresence is? Who can safely declare that we can never know ourselves well enough to understand what is merely of the finite personality, and what it is within us that is actually God's presence, however minute that portion may be?

We have seen that God is unchangeable Wisdom, or the highest intelligence. Does not this Wisdom

exist everywhere? All people have more or less of it, and they can increase their wisdom without robbing each other. Therefore it is not inherent in man himself, because it is much greater, but he is the medium of it. He develops it, and grows in it through his experience. It is revealed by that *intuition* by which we see what we ought to do in a given case. For instance, a person sees that by giving a quiet and kind reply of information in answer to an abusive individual who has misjudged him, the wrath of the other may be immediately subdued, and an apology may follow. While, if rage be returned for wrath, a rupture may follow that may cause years of unhappiness to both persons and to others. Nearly all people recognise this returning of good for evil as wisdom, whether they practise it or not. It proves itself to be such, for consider the difference in the result in the above illustration. The self-denial that prevents a difficulty between two people and turns it into a lesson in patience, thereby doing good to the angry individual and preventing a trouble of years' standing, is a matter of such economy that no one would fail to see its great wisdom, though some might not be open to enough of it to do likewise.

Now, this wisdom, being omnipresent, is not limited to any one person. All can have it whether they now possess it or not. Where does it come from? It can also be increased without robbing any one. Where is its source? If it has any power it must exist somewhere. Public speakers, in the

fervour of their advocacy of some good cause, sometimes rise above themselves and speak better than they know. How is it possible? Whence come the inspiration and wisdom, that which really proves itself to be wisdom? It cannot be from man, for man does not have it to start with, but grows into it. Is not the Wisdom which is revealed in the universe in its magnificent construction and the wonderful regularity of its operations,—is not this Wisdom, infinite in capacity and power, the same that we have found revealed through humanity in the instances referred to and in all similar cases? There could not be two wisdoms, for, as we have already shown, that would imply an opposition. And furthermore, nobody entertains the idea of two great unseen intelligences. We must, therefore, conclude that there is but one, and that that one is God. We thus begin to gain a practical conception of what God is, of His presence in us, in at least one respect.

Some have believed in a God whom they imagined to be central in one place, and therefore could have a form and be omnipresent by His power. But that is not being omnipresent Himself. One may say that He would then be omnipresent in effect, and so He would; but not omnipresent in fact, and the *fact* is the point in question. If He is omnipresent at all, and infinite at all, He must be so without qualification. And we have seen some proof of this in the fact of the omnipresence of wisdom. We shall also see further proof of it by recognising

God's other attributes. What are His attributes? Of course they are every quality and power that is good, and in describing these we further understand what God is, and also see why Paul speaks of God as "One God and Father, who is over all, and through all, and *in* you all"; that is, that we *do* live directly in God and He in us.

What is every quality that is good? Life, Truth, Wisdom, Intuition, Understanding, Love, Justice, Mercy, Patience, Peace, Harmony, and every one of these to an infinite and perfect degree. Now, as every one of these powers and qualities would each need all the rest to make each fully balanced and consistent, they must be embraced in One, and that One is God. As every one is wise, therefore Wisdom is a more comprehensive word than all others except God. And the term Infinite Wisdom suggests a practical conception of God.

But we have not yet as fully shown as we may, that God is omnipresent in fact as well as in power. The qualities or attributes of Life, Truth, Intuition, Love, Justice, Mercy, Patience—certainly these must belong to God; and yet these are everywhere, are they not? All mankind exhibits them in greater or less degree, and if any man increases the degree, it may be done *here* where he is, may it not? A man may increase his powers or virtues in one place as well as in another. Then these and all good attributes and powers exist everywhere. They do not belong to man alone, but man is the medium of them, therefore they do not depend upon him for



their existence. These facts show us more of God than we saw at first, and what He is, so far as these attributes and powers exhibit Him; and that He is omnipresent. As we all have these attributes and powers in us to some extent, we see in part what it is that is God in us.

It follows, from all that has been said, that we have no good quality or power wholly our own, but that all we possess is God in us. This corresponds to what Jesus said when they called him "Good Master," and he replied: "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but God." That expresses it exactly. But we have not understood this. While we have believed that there was somewhat of God in man, we have not understood what it was that was not ourselves but God; and we have taken to ourselves the entire credit of whatever good quality or power we have had, and have ascribed the same credit to each other.

Yet, says some one, a person may have a little good, and not be wholly bad. Very true; but whose good is that? Is it not God in that person?

If you or I have any good quality or power, where do we get it from? If you or I display any love, and feel love, is it not God in us? We admit that love is everywhere, and that there must be a God, and that He must have love. His works show it. Now, if you or I have love, is it any less in *quality*, as far as it goes, than God's love? If not the same quality, is it love? Now, if you or I exhibit mercy, justice, truth, wisdom, are they not

the same in quality and kind, so far as one exercises them, as God's mercy, justice, truth, wisdom? Though only an atom, it may be, or a spark of the infinite love, mercy, justice, truth, or wisdom, yet it must be of the same kind and quality; because, if not, it would not be real love, mercy, truth, or wisdom. There is no half-way position in any of these things. In the active manifestation of any good quality or power, wherever found, it is thus far as real as God's own quality; for otherwise, I repeat, it is an independent goodness or wisdom, which amounts to an opposition, and we have already seen that this cannot be.

The very power by which we reason out this subject is, therefore, God in us. This does not imply that we cannot err. We would simply be God if we could not err. We are finite manifestations of the All-Good, the All-Power, the All-Wisdom, and it is our part to grow and develop in these things, and increase the manifestation. Further, God is our very life. As a recent writer puts it: "Life is of God, and even in the unregenerate there is seed for the development of a spiritual nature. Man may abandon God, but God will not abandon him. There is the throbbing of the divine life in every artery of his corrupted heart."

It follows naturally that, if God is our life, our strength, our wisdom,—the true attitude is one of receptivity to God, and a willingness to follow whatever comes from that source; and always to have a desire to see the true way and move in it,

regardless of personal preference. This marks an unselfish habit of life and attitude of soul, which is, of course, the only way to true success, and is the economy of life if our premise is right,—namely, if it is God who works in us “both to will and to do,” and if, like Jesus, of ourselves unaided we can do nothing. There is no measuring in words the benefits which come from this truth. For this knowledge is power, and it increases with a person as rapidly as he becomes open to it, through his intelligent development and receptivity. It becomes the wisdom of every occasion, and the correct thought for every action and word. In fact, it is the perfect key to health, happiness, and success.

It is of vital consequence to understand the divine sonship. For it reveals the fact that, instead of living in comparative weakness and inefficiency, we can approach infinite powers, just so far as we become open to and understand them.

How shall we become open to these infinite powers? By understanding this sonship, by recognising that whatever powers we each possess are not merely our own, but are God in us. The knowledge that our powers and capabilities are God in us takes away all desire to act recklessly, or otherwise than with the best of motives and for the best results.

The understanding of this sonship is gained by understanding ourselves analytically. . . . The worst enemy we have in getting this understanding and in enjoying the infinite power spoken of is selfishness. Man is born in ignorance, but he can grow

out of that condition if he overcomes his selfishness. In proportion as he is impeded by this, it is like a dead weight to defeat his progress toward light and truth. For, if he is in reality a medium for that which is not himself, the more he is bound up in his own affairs, good or bad, the less can that other power use him; and this selfishness prevents his finding out his true status; it blinds his eyes and seals him in ignorance.

As we were born in ignorance of ourselves and of the truth, what arrangement did God make for working through us; how is He to get the work done that each of us is assigned to do? Indirectly, through our natural belief of necessity for action, but, directly, through love. This love is a prompting toward another; and, as our ignorance of life and truth makes us largely dependent upon each other for help of various kinds, the flow of love and good-will and of charity is thereby promoted, and this opens us to an exercise of the God-powers within us. This spontaneous love, the opposite of selfishness, opens the soul to a full and free action for whatever cause we may promote, and its stream is always laden with the dews of heaven for every thirsty soul it may help.

Here we see why Paul said, "Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbour's good," because man's real power, God, works through one for another; and love unites us all in one bond of brotherhood, and in our common Father, Reality. And we see why Jesus said so much about oneness

with his disciples, and why he laid down such far-reaching and apparently superhuman laws for the practice of love, namely, "Love your enemies," "Do good to them that hate you and despitefully use you." It was because love was the very flood-gate through which flow man's real and true powers, and the wisdom that makes success and breaks down all obstacles. Christ's law of love, therefore, is the economy of life, the open door for the powers of the Infinite to flow through us to secure our prosperity and to do mighty works.

. . . . .

What is truth?<sup>1</sup> In an abstract sense it is that which is unchangeable. What is the unchangeable truth referred to by Christ in this instance? That man is, in principle and in fact, a spiritual being, born of spirit, which spirit is God; that the appearance does not show the truth of our life; and that the world does not correctly understand it; and that we are all spiritual beings existing in God, who is our only life and goodness.

Certainly, we exist within Him, if He is omnipresent, so present as to be within each one of us. If this is the fact or truth that Christ referred to, it is easy to see that the understanding of it must result in freedom from the many evils and fears the world suffers under. And, if this can be done, it must be a great and a glorious truth to find out, so valuable

<sup>1</sup> From a discourse delivered at the Church of Divine Unity, Boston; published in the *Mental Healing Monthly*, July, 1887.

that no one can afford to be without it or lose any time in getting the understanding of it.

"The truth shall make you free." Free from what? First, free from all those doubts and uncertainties which mark the inner life of nearly every earnest person in this world. Instead there come a peace and an assurance that turn darkness into light and doubt into surety, because one has now changed from the false basis of mere belief to the solid foundation of practical understanding. . . .

Second, the truth makes free from fear of all kinds of dangers, apprehensions of evil, fear of coming to want, or of failure in business, and every other fear, including fear of disease; and also it gives freedom from liability to it. Ought not this to be the result of finding out that we are spiritual beings, so closely allied to God that His powers are our powers and we have no other, and that His harmony can at any time take the place of our discord? Christ said: "If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Does not this cover as much freedom in its import as I have described? Let us look farther into Christ's words, to see if he provides for a better, happier, healthier, freer life than the average Christian enjoys.

In healing the sick and infirm, in some instances he said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," thus classing sin and sickness together. He did the same when he said to a man he had healed: "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee." In John xiv., 12, it is recorded that he said, "He that believeth on me,

the works that I do shall he do also"; and they did so in those times. But the promise is without limit as to time, or age of the world, or kind of persons. Therefore, it would seem from the wording of the passage that a Christian in any age might do Christ's works. Certainly, he ought, if sin and sickness belong in the same class, because it is the Christian's duty to avoid sin, to overcome it in himself, and try to help others to overcome it.

Christ also commissioned his disciples to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark the import of the words,—“go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” There is no limit here as to time or number of people. And he named five different experiences that should occur as evidences or signs to those who understood the gospel. Among these was the healing power, showing that a person had not the full gospel, or truth, unless he could conquer disease as well as other evils.

Does not Christ, therefore, show that the truth that makes a true Christian is a truth that makes a person “every whit whole,” delivering the body from its torments as well as the soul from its sins and temptations?

I leave it with those who are church-going Christians to determine for yourselves. But, however you decide, would it not afford great relief and greatly promote your Christianity if you could discover a ready and effective way out of physical suffering? Certainly it would. The average person cannot be

remarkable for Christianity nor be remarkably happy and be in poor health at the same time; and even those who appear to be happy and resigned in chronic illness and sufferings are not submitting themselves to God's will half so much as they think; because, in the first place, it is not God's will that they or any one else should be sick; and, secondly, I have noticed that those same persons who think they are so resigned to God's will that they should be sick will go miles and miles to see some new physician or patronise some new cure, by which, if possible, to get well, showing that the instincts of natural wisdom are stronger and really wiser than religious sentiment and belief.

Jesus gave us the rule of knowing persons and things by their fruits. Now, as disease is bad, if it comes from God, then He is bad. This you will not admit. Therefore, as disease is bad, it must come from a bad source. "But," says some persistent Christian who has more belief than wisdom, "God permits sickness." How do you know that? We have found disease to be bad, and that it should be classed with the errors and evils and sins of the world, where it comes from.

Now, if you excuse yourselves and attribute disease to God, you must also charge Him with all other errors and evils; for all belong together. But, if God ever endorsed or permitted disease in any way, Jesus would never have cured a single case of it, because he would not have upset his Father's works. Jesus opposed diseases as much as he did



the errors of the world, and he classed them all together. God permits one no more than another: He permits sickness no more than he does murders. We must unlearn our sicknesses as we unlearn our other shortcomings and evil doings. The possibility of doing this is the glorious truth that is just now dawning upon the world for a second time.

Jesus revealed it eighteen hundred years ago; and the Church enjoyed the revelation for about three hundred years, then went into "the dark ages" of human opinions and self-conceits, from which, after fifteen hundred years of feeding on medical husks and "the wisdom of the world," it is just now returning to "the Father's house." . . .

It is the truth that makes us "free indeed." To be "free indeed" would seem to imply that there was an unusual liberty in the truth. This we find to be exactly so; and this throws light on that other passage which says, "Where God is, there is liberty." What is that liberty? First let us find where God is. "Who by searching can find out God?" asks a Bible writer.

Perhaps, then, we had better take Christ's words for a guide. Where does he say God is? In His kingdom. Where is His kingdom? Within. Then, if the kingdom of God is within every one of us (for God is no respecter of persons), we have only to understand that to get into that kingdom, body and soul.

"Do you mean," some one asks, "that we can have such understanding, right here in this life, of

what is meant by the phrase 'the kingdom of God is within you,' that we shall be free from sickness, can avoid sinning, can 'rejoice always' with Paul, and virtually put the troubles and trials of life under foot? "

Yes, in proportion as you understand and are in earnest, and are governed by the spirit of truth as well as the letter of it. I do not say that one will be free from trials, which wise people consider blessings if rightly met, and which, therefore, we should welcome. But concerning sickness and committing sin (which is conscious and selfish error), and concerning unhappiness and yielding to troubles, you must admit that there can be none of these in the kingdom of God. Therefore in proportion as you enter that kingdom, or set it up understandingly in yourself, you must be characteristic of that kingdom. We can all measure our possession of the kingdom of God or truth by its fruits in us.

Hence, if we ever yield to fear in any direction, it is a test of our understanding and of the amount of truth we have. We need to make the truth practical for the minutiae of every-day life, and we can do so. In all the little every-day experiences, one learns to take hold of the truth, or the God that worketh within, in such a tangible manner that one is carried over the trials or perplexities without entertaining a doubt, knowing that the love which casts out fear is a living, practical reality, not merely a sentimental belief.

The liberty of the truth enters into every moment

of existence. It protects us from being contaminated by any wrong mental influence or atmosphere we may come in contact with; and in proportion as we realise that Wisdom, or God, is always calm, never moved or disturbed, we are free from excitement, preserve our mental equilibrium and maintain our physical harmony.

If at any time we feel a depressing or unpleasant atmosphere or state, we may know that it can do no harm if we have on the armour of wisdom, which is a shield from all evil. When we see persons reasoning themselves into trouble, still holding to beliefs of disease, with eyes set toward the dark and apprehending fearful results, we cannot be affected or influenced so long as we see only the truth, the liberty, the light.

Moreover, we can so keep on this armour or shield of wisdom and truth that our thought will protect our children, who are exposed by association with the world of error. We can teach them a great deal of this freedom of the Perfect Love; and they will use it and thus be saved from many of the ills that come to those in the bondage of belief in disease.

When Christ said to the Jews that the truth should make them free, they answered just as the world does to-day, wholly from a material standpoint, saying that they had never been in bondage to any man. So people to-day think they are free, because they can do as they please; but their freedom is slavery of the worst kind. They are slaves to their fears, slaves to their priests and to the doctors;

that is, they are afraid of results so long as they know not the truth of life, and do not understand the power of spirit to free them from all bondage.

Now this is just the point where the followers of this spiritual science differ from the world in general. We have learned not to judge after the flesh, but to prove things by the spirit and the understanding; and this has let us out of our former bondage. Inasmuch as we understand, it makes us true sons of God, which is the inheritance into which all men were born. It is an inheritance the precious value of which cannot be adequately portrayed in words. Let us, then, say with Paul: "With freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast, therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE POWER OF THOUGHT

**A**T the outset of our inquiry we saw that much depends upon the point of view from which the relationships of mind and body are regarded. The preceding chapters have shown how the spiritual-healing pioneers broke away from bondage to physical methods of cure, and upon the basis of their new insights developed an interior method of philosophy. We have seen that the method and theory thus acquired gradually changed from a relatively superficial mental theory of disease to a religious doctrine of the inner life. In the preceding chapter we came in sight of the central spiritual principle which underlies the best work of devotees of this school. In order to prepare the way for a more detailed account of the theory of spiritual healing, let us revert to the elementary principle which has proved to be the most direct introduction to the subject, namely, the power of thought. It is the more necessary to dwell upon this principle, inasmuch as many students of the general doctrine fail to pass beyond it. No mental-healing subject is more important at the outset, yet none has been more misunderstood. Rightly to estimate the

power of thought is to be able to avoid the extravagant conclusions sometimes drawn from the facts of mental influence.

In order to treat our subject exhaustively, it would be necessary to begin with an idealistic analysis of human experience and point out that, whatever the appearances, man is really living a mental life. We should then need to show that mind is the neglected factor in most of our theories, the formative, directive power which has played a great part in human evolution. It would then appear that precisely because man uses the mind constantly, readily, and effectively he is largely unaware of its power; and hence falls into manifold illusions regarding himself and life as a whole. But, still confining our attention to the considerations which have actually led to mental-healing conclusions, let us turn to the more superficial phenomena of passing influences and beliefs.<sup>1</sup>

A little reflection shows that there is a close connection between momentary thought and later conduct. A single dominant idea will bring about a revolution in all our thinking. Our boasted knowledge is largely constituted of ephemeral beliefs, a large percentage of which we accepted as true, without question. That is to say, what we call "knowledge" is not a scientific product. Note, for example, the power of superstition among emotionally religious people who accept the priest's word as

<sup>1</sup> The present subject is considered more philosophically in *The Power of Silence*, chapters iv.-vii., revised edition, 1904.

law. Observe the results of medical opinion upon those who are slaves to such opinions. Scarcely a man of us is aware to what an extent we are beholden to prevailing fears and theories about our health. If a theologian tells us that we have committed sins and must, therefore, suffer certain penalties; if a doctor says we have a certain disease which may lead to death; if we own property and report says that it is likely to be lost; or, if a rumour comes that a dear friend has met with a fatal accident, no matter whether the report be false or true, *if we believe it* it has as much effect upon us as though it were true, and we suffer in proportion to our conviction. We constantly mistake belief for reality; we are again and again deceived by people and things. For the majority of men, *believing* is a far easier and simpler process than systematic endeavour to discover truth. Whatever we believe is usually as real to us for the time being, it is as influential, as troublesome, or hope-giving, as though it were truth itself.

We approach every experience, every new book, every new town or country, each day and year, with some opinion, some feeling of expectancy. We always have some theory, some leading idea about ourselves. We live in our troubles or out of and above them; we work to better our condition, or we sit back in despondency. That this particular mental attitude is an active cause in determining our condition, and either keeps us in it or takes us out of it, every one knows who has closely observed human life.

People have been cured through strenuous exertion of the will, and nearly every one has, on occasion, risen above and thrown off conditions when some friend was in danger; when there was an entertainment one wanted very much to attend; some duty that called one away from the thought of self; some task which *must* be done. The day labourer, the man or woman who is *obliged* to be up at a certain hour and at work, the mother in charge of a family, the physician and philanthropist called upon to expose themselves to all sorts of contagion, are governed by a sense of necessity or by some inspiring ideal. This controlling idea leaves no room for other thoughts. The human spirit is capable of rising to the occasion and carrying everything before it. But where there is no necessity, every one knows that the mind falls back upon itself, back to illness, invalidism, selfishness, all the complaints that accompany listless inactivity. People have faded away from loss of hope and ambition. Others have raised themselves almost from the grave by a firm determination to live. Place a man where his best and strongest characteristics are called to the surface, and he is another creature. Change of scene, change of atmosphere or occupation, produces a wonderful transformation. And all this for one chief reason: the *mind* has been changed; some *idea* has made an impression upon it and turned the whole activity into another channel. *When the mind changes, the life changes with it.*

Again, observe how bodily conduct is affected by



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loss of memory, insanity, double personality, hallucination, and hypnotism. Or, study any physical exercise, any occupation whatever, however material or mechanical, and you will find that it is an *idea* which led to its development; it is an habitual direction of mind which now governs its details. The artist struggling to realise an ideal on canvas or in marble, the man of business trying to outwit his fellow-men, the child at play, the general on the field of battle, are engaged in the pursuit of one line of thought to the exclusion of many others. The contortions of the insane person, the comical actions of the one who is the subject of hypnotic experiments, result simply because *all ideas are excluded* except the one powerful direction of mind which for the time governs the entire being. People are controlled by hobbies, manias, fads, fashions, fears, theories, prejudices; and nothing is easier than to become imprisoned in ruts which not only exclude all that lies beyond them, but at the same time bind and imprison the activities of body and brain. Every one is in some sense the servant of ideas; every one is also an idealist and may learn to become wisely idealistic. Every one is absorbed, consciously or unconsciously, sanely or insanely, in the task of character-making or unmaking, in shaping both the immediate and the distant future through stern and relentless mental action and reaction.

Whatever line of thought or conduct is continued until it becomes a habit is likely to wear a pathway which renders the repetition of such thinking or

acting a matter of necessity; and only the utmost persistence can counteract such tendencies and drive the thought into a new channel. For instance, if a man has been in the habit of working his brain in a certain way,—if he is a physiologist, a minister, or a mechanic,—his mind has a tendency to be active in that direction and that alone, regardless of the great world of thought beyond, and his brain, copying his mental habit, has changed its structure to correspond with the habit of thought. Give him an idea outside of his profession and he is not apt to grasp it readily or see what you mean. He habitually looks at things from a material point of view, we will say, and you from a spiritual, and your words are Greek to him. Or, attempt to teach him a new language and he must meet and overcome opposition and density before he can break through and open up a new chamber of his brain, or set up a new current of thought. In order to succeed with him there must be some point of contact: you must interest him; and a new *interest* is, as we have seen, the wonderful transforming power which marvelously changes a person in different mental and physical surroundings. It is some absorbing interest that controls the insane person. It is some wise interest, some ideal, that shapes every well-directed life.

It is just such a change of interest and of habit that any sick person needs, since the thought is for a time turned into a wrong channel. The person must be roused, mentally shaken, pulled out of ruts,

and what one cannot do for one's self may often be done by others, by those who know how, judiciously and persistently, to turn a sufferer's attention into another channel.

A person becomes morbid and insane simply by dwelling too long on *one idea*. Every one knows that painful sensations increase in intensity when one dwells upon them, and if the attention is called away one feels better. Interest a child's attention and you can control him far easier than by any word of command. Hypnotism consists, in one sentence, in the directing of one person's attention by another. With the change of attention goes the activity of the organism. It would be discouraging and painful in the extreme to learn that we are so much at the mercy of habits of brain and mind, if the study did not show us how we are daily and hourly making our own happiness and misery.

The general conclusion naturally is that, since thought has such power, there must be some power behind it which can be understood and relied on; there must be some higher law, some far-reaching tendency whose purpose we either aid or impede by our thought. The question then is, how to take advantage of every element of thought which shall restore us when we are ill, every thought which shall take us out of and above trouble, every direction of mind which shall lead to breadth and soundness of thought, break up the ruts, the prejudices, the thousand and one fears and opinions which have so long held us in bondage. It is a question of

optimism applied to health, to daily conduct, and character-building. It is a question whether our thoughts, our fears and painful sensations, and the mental influences by which we are environed *shall control us or whether we shall control them.*

Very few people realise to what an extent they are subject not merely to the opinions and beliefs of their fellow-men, but to the subtle mental atmospheres which beset every household, every environment. People so readily fall into similar habits of mind and life that they take these influences as matters of course, or are utterly oblivious of them. One strong mind sets the example for hundreds of others, and the others follow without knowing that they are following. Remarkable cases of hypnotic influence are reported in the papers, yet little is said about the far more striking cases to which the word hypnotism is seldom applied. The fact of telepathy is fully accepted in certain quarters, but not much has been made known concerning the hidden thought-transference which binds mind to mind as if we were all connected by a network of fine wires.

It is plainly not merely a question of the unfortunate influences of our mental life, but of the nature of the life we regularly lead. The occasional or morbid and harmful influences are in reality exaggerated illustrations of phenomena to which we are constantly subject. Fundamental to the particular phases of the inner life which arouse curiosity and provoke thought there is always the prime fact of *consciousness* as the central item of our existence.

In the last analysis we are constrained to admit that we see and know the world according to the thought or attitude which we bring to it. Hence the importance of penetrating far enough into the inner world to look about and view all aspects of life in relation to consciousness as the primary factor.

To the unreflecting mind, consciousness seems to come and go with the waking hours. But inquiry shows that the sensations, volitions, and thoughts of which we are actively aware are but a small portion of consciousness. While you are listening to a lecture, for example, or reading by the window, you are faintly aware of noises outside in the street, of lights and shades around you, of organic sensations, and passing trains of thought not germane to the subject. While you give attention to the central theme of the book before you, you also carry on a responsive line of thinking, in which you draw upon all your past, so far as it contributes. Currents of thought momentarily emerge into consciousness and take away your attention for a time, presently to be dismissed. Many emotions and memories blend imperceptibly with these passing thoughts. Sometimes the interruptions prove to be more consequential than the central theme. You seem to be carrying on a deeper process of reflection which bears only occasional relation to the more actively chosen line of thought.

Evidently it is merely the most active portion of consciousness that sleeps. Oftentimes one awakens with a train of thought on which one has surely

made progress during the night. An anxious thought troubles and perplexes while the mind is for the most part asleep. A decision to awaken at a specified hour in the morning has power to arouse the self into conscious activity at the appointed time. It is subconsciousness which dynamically receives an idea and turns it over until it has become our own. Undoubtedly the subconscious factor plays a greater part in the life of the morbid, the criminal, and the insane than is ordinarily thought. Again, our most mature convictions are largely products of subconsciousness, or are, at least, mainly preconscious possessions until the proper occasion serves to make them consciously our own. In general, we may say that it is the self that never sleeps which realises our ideals. In whatever direction we positively and creatively turn, our subconsciousness tends faithfully to follow. It is probable that we often become subconsciously more receptive to the omnipresent Wisdom than when we self-consciously try to open the mind. There is less distraction, less resistance in the subconscious world. On the other hand, all that we know concerning it is discovered by analysis of consciousness by inference. Hence we may conclude that to control our subconsciousness we must first understand and master consciousness.

Rightly directed, the subconscious self is ever active for us, a willing servant, like a better half, —wiser than we, ever ready to add its counsels to ours. Hence it is once more true that “as a man

thinketh in his *heart* so is he," not as he merely thinks momentarily. The subconscious realm is the domain of habit, inheritance, temperament. All these factors, together with our prejudices and preconceptions, stealthily influence our thought and our conduct. All these might, it is true, be brought into the light of active consciousness. But in the majority of cases we are far more what our subconsciousness makes us than what we have consciously wrought.

But thought not only has the power to make the world seem whatever our opinion makes it out to be, but it tends to attract its like. Every one knows how easy it is when one begins to worry about the health of a friend, to become anxious for oneself, or to trouble over financial affairs. The first thought leads to another. If circumstances have made you somewhat despondent you readily find ground for greater despair. The mind quickly suggests many possible troubles and calamities. It pictures the worst, it grows and becomes strong by what it feeds on, until finally, if you are not wise enough to stop such thinking you work yourself into a thoroughly morbid, fearful, and nervous state; your fears and foolish imaginings seem as real as though they had corporeal existence, and all because you countenanced the unhealthy thought in the beginning.

We create for ourselves, at first mentally, and often physically, what we expect. People at large, and especially friends, are ever ready to help us on.

How willing they are to sympathise with trouble, to enter into it and say, "It is too bad," and all that, instead of trying to turn our thought into a wiser channel! Friends almost feel it a duty sometimes to share their fears. Whenever we are depressed or ill the whole theory and practice of medicine is ready to help the matter on, to make the most of every little sensation, to describe it, name it, treat it as purely physical, and to ignore the real cause of the difficulty and its surest cure. The point to note is that we must nip the wrong thoughts in the bud; we must not permit morbid and discouraging thoughts to remain in consciousness. For whatever wins conscious attention is likely to attract its like, to draw similar thoughts, and add to itself by accretion until it has become a mountain of difficulty.

To make clearer this combined effect of a continued interest or ideal in life, the co-operation of subconsciousness, and the power of thought to attract its like, let us suppose the case of a writer who wishes to produce a book on a given subject which, for the sake of the present inquiry, shall be a treatise on the effect of thought. In the first place, every one who has a fixed ideal, like a desire to learn a language or to become a musician, is happier and more energetic, with less time to think about self and become morbid. Our imaginary author is ever on the alert for material. His desire, namely, to consider the power of mind, becomes a permanent habit of thought, and he is constantly turning the



subject over to get new light on it. When he meets people he observes how one interests and influences another. He notices what a wonderful power some people have of cheering and encouraging their associates, not so much by what they say as by their presence—that sunny mental atmosphere which surrounds them. When he reads or listens to lectures he is still observing the power of ideas, and wherever he turns in history, science, art, invention, business, he discovers some exemplification of his main thesis. He sees people and things from a certain point of view because he is consciously looking for that particular line of information. His thought runs in a given channel, not wholly, but as a chief or leading interest. He maintains a definite direction of mind. He finds what he looks for, and if he finally reaches what he sought in a fairly satisfactory way it is because he bore an ideal in mind until it was realised. Now suppose he persists until he becomes a “crank” and is oblivious of any ideal except his own peculiar hobby. Then his only salvation lies in becoming equally energetic in some new line of thought which shall restore mental equilibrium.

Again, let us picture the conduct of one who, aware of the power of thought, and convinced that happiness and misery depend on ourselves, determines to hold only those thoughts in habitual consciousness which shall contribute to good health and a wisely useful life. To think wisely, healthfully, *sanely*, this is our idealist’s deep desire. To take

the most philosophical attitude toward life, this is his ultimate intent. How does he proceed?

Let a person offend him, or say some unkind word to which he would formerly have replied with some expression equally unkind. He now argues that if he "pays the person back in his own coin" he thereby descends to the level of the one who has abused him; he attracts thoughts like his abuses, and gets trouble out of the experience in proportion as he enters into it. Accordingly, he seeks some charitable interpretation of the affair. He reasons that the person will receive sufficient punishment from the very memory of having uttered the unkind word, without his interference; and that probably the person would never have spoken unkindly had he or she reflected for a moment. He thinks of something good, something pleasant about the offender, and either expresses it or lets it efface the unpleasant memory. In a word, *he controls his thought or passion without letting it control him*. He is master of the situation and of his own state of mind.

Once more, let it be a friend in distress or one seriously ill. Our idealist does not permit himself to say, "How ill you look!" or "I am afraid you will have this or that malady," for such talk surely would not help the sufferer. The sufferer has fears and troubles enough without the contributions of would-be friends. Nor does our wise idealist enter into and discuss the trouble, its symptoms and causes. He realises that whatever he says is likely

to have some effect, perhaps a powerful effect, on the troubled listener, and that the effect *must be beneficial*, or he had better maintain silence. Whatever he can say that is hopeful, confident, trustful, and destined to give the perplexed friend a broader view of the situation will tend to create a healthier, more helpful atmosphere, in which both may share. He recollects that deep within every human being there is a soul, a spirit, capable of rising and asserting its supremacy, and that whenever a person is in despair it is because this spirit is inactive; it is morbid or one-sided in its view. To speak the word which shall quicken this dormant spirit to consciousness of its possibilities—this is the way to be most surely and immediately helpful. Once stir the spirit or the thought into activity in a wise direction, and it will gain impetus as it acts, it will draw to it its affinities, and grow strong by exercise of its own powers. Thought is a power that one may trust. It is a silent, ever-active servant, tending to bring all the mental life into correspondence with the clear-cut decisions, the calm trust, and the persistent ideal of the thinker whose agent it is.

Such, in brief outline and conservatively stated, are the elementary considerations which have led the way to mental-healing convictions. A word in conclusion seems necessary in order to guard against the confusions of language and the extravagant claims which often mar mental-healing theories. It by no means follows, for example, that "thought is omnipotent." Without a self to make use of

thought, thought would have neither existence nor power. The utmost one can say is that the divine thought, or creative world-plan, is the permanent object of the greatest Power. Obviously, one must distinguish between the divine universe, existing in order and degree, and the universe as man ordinarily thinks about it. Scientific or philosophic thought about the world would, of course, take precedence over lawless thought. Hence the passing opinions of men assume a relatively low rank. Man may imagine the world to be whatever he will; no thought of his can change its eternal order. Each substance, plant, or animal has its place, its quality, in the divine order, independent of the "subconscious suggestions of the race." That man, by taking thought, may temporarily alter the effect of substances which are taken into his system, is another matter.

Again, there are natural conditions of existence which the wise man will conform to, whatever his belief concerning the power of thought, within its proper sphere. To attempt to "demonstrate over" these conditions is to tamper with life itself. On the other hand, he who first ascertains what the natural conditions are for a person of his temperament, may very well increase his efficiency by the power of thought. For example, a man can learn to rest and sleep more reposefully, live more moderately. When the sensation of fatigue warns him that he is approaching the usual limits of his power of work, he may by taking thought acquire a wiser

art of work, learn to labour more temperately. Many of our diseases spring primarily from excess in some form. The disease, then, is Nature's lesson. A hint to the wise is sufficient.

To allege that "thoughts are forces," or "vibrations," or to say, with Prentice Mulford, that "thoughts are things," is to confuse the inner life with the natural world. Forces are, properly speaking, natural, such as heat, light, electricity. Thoughts may, indeed, be followed by "vibrations," but a vibration is obviously a mode of motion of energy. Thought may picture, represent, infer, or construct: it is volition that carries thought into execution. Corresponding to the volitional activity, there are, of course, many forms of physiological force and vibratory motion. But there is no basis of fact for the assertion that thought is the entire affair—image, affirmation, volition, brain-response, force, "thing," and all.

Nor would it even be correct to declare that man is the sum of his past thoughts. That would imply that there was no divine spark to begin with, no soul or self, and no will. There is obviously a decided difference between thought as merely contemplated and thought followed by action. It is a great consolation to discover that most of our thoughts are superficial and impotent. It is not until an idea wins our attention, becomes the object of will, that it is followed by efficient activity; and it is plainly the ensuing activity that constitutes "the power" of thought, not the mere thought

itself. Hence we need not be concerned with the thoughts that have not been consciously or subconsciously followed by productive activity.

It is not, then, our previous thinking that has made us what we are, but our previous *action*, founded on the basis of what we originally were as souls. The soul both thinks and wills, contemplates and selects. Sometimes, no doubt, ideas fairly take possession of us. But for the most part it is our own character that decides, and character expresses itself fundamentally in will; it is much more than mere "thought habit." It is persistent activity, sent out in a chosen direction, that originates habit; and thought is the image or plan which we put before us. Hence it would be superficial and misleading to reduce man to a collection of thoughts.

These discriminations are of vital import for all who are interested in the practical bearings of "the power of thought." To allege that "thought is omnipotent," or to reduce will and the soul to a collection of "thought habits," is to open the way for the most extravagant assertions in regard to human power, to arouse the false hopes which were once so popular in the mental-healing world. On the other hand, to assign thought to its proper sphere is by no means to lose sight of the fundamental principles of mental healing. Within its sphere the limits of therapeutic thought have never been discovered. But mental therapists have not been content to keep thought within its sphere; hence the bitter disappointments of those who have been

forced to learn that there are other powers in the world.

The moral of our tale, then, is not that thought can have its own way and actually create its world, but that man can seem to make the world what it is not, by objectifying his thoughts. To discover this fact is, with Mr. Quimby, to learn how man has "made his own happiness and misery." The inference to be drawn is that, having learned the source of his errors, man should seek the truth, begin the herculean task of getting his own thoughts out of the way, that he may learn what life really is. If thought has been a power for ill it can now become a power for good. First of all, it must take its clues from experience, not impose its views on experience. It must start with facts, discover laws, and build in accordance with those laws. Its own facts are, of course, to be included. But chief among those is the fact that will is fundamental, that it is the thoughts which are permitted to become ends of action that are really consequential. Hence what is needed is wise choice, followed by right thinking and by right conduct.

The first step in the discovery of "our actual situation in life" is, no doubt, to become aware of the power of thought, that is, of the power of opinions, beliefs, fears, mental influences and atmospheres, mental pictures and subconscious reactions. But the great discovery is *the power of the Spirit*. Hence the reconstruction of theory and life which these discoveries call for is not to be made in mental

but in spiritual terms. Now, when it is a question of our relationship with the Spirit, the great consideration is receptivity, a willing attitude, followed by co-operative activity. All thought is secondary to the attitude or "prevailing love" from which it springs. One may affirm thought and build speculative structures without number, and all to no avail until one actually adopts a different spirit. Since conduct, not theory, is fundamental, the prime need is the cultivation of the mode of life which is most in keeping with the promptings of the Spirit. This means the acquirement of self-control, equanimity, poise. It implies a philosophy of adjustment, not a doctrine of denial; a theory of spiritual evolution, not an assumption of present perfection. If the *apparent* situation has been created by our thought, the *real* situation must now be discovered through our faithfulness. It is the *life* that tells in the long run, and to live the life man finds it necessary to take the clue from the universe which the Spirit builds by a purpose far transcending any will of his own.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### SPIRITUAL HEALING

**A**S already intimated, the subject of healing is by far the most difficult aspect of the teaching with which we are here concerned. In the first place, the theory means very little save to those who have had the therapeutic experience. In the second place, the terminology in which one is inclined to describe the experience is often vague, inexact, bordering upon the mystical, involving manifold religious and philosophical problems. The somewhat mystical language seems to be demanded in order to describe, or at least suggest, the experience. Yet nothing mystical is meant in the vague sense of the word. The doctrine is through and through practical, and a definite mental process is implied. The only resource seems to be to state the doctrine and describe the experience as one is inclined, trusting that the empirical and religious values will be appreciated, and that the method of healing will become concrete for those who put it to the test. It is obviously of far more consequence to describe the experience for what it may be worth than to be so concerned lest one fall into pantheistic speech as to neglect the real value of the doctrine,

There is very little in the manuscripts of Mr. Quimby and his immediate followers that will be of service in this connection, hence we must depend upon our own resources. Accordingly, a part of what follows is revised and condensed from a little volume issued a few years ago under the title, *Methods and Problems of Spiritual Healing*. The object of that book was to raise questions and stimulate inquiry. The purpose of the revision is to put in permanent form the ideas and descriptions of experience which best exemplify the teaching which was developed out of Mr. Quimby's pioneer work in this field. So far as allowance must be made for the personal equation, the exposition is from the point of view of one who has not for many years been in the practice of healing, but whose interest has been the development of the practical and philosophical implications of the healing experience. The exposition is necessarily somewhat superficial at first, and only gradually approaches the heart of the experience, which one would like to convey by some miracle, inasmuch as language so often fails.

1. In the first place, one is constrained to admit the sense of wonder which attaches to the entire process, even after one has made it the study of years. The subject is, in fact, much like that of any specific attempt to wrest from the universe every detail of one of its secrets—something always escapes us. When Nature awakes from her long winter's sleep, and everything expands and grows in the light of the warm summer's sun, what causes

this marvellous change—can anybody tell? The scientific man may enumerate the steps whereby the great transformation takes place, just as he may analyse the physical basis of life. But what is the dormant *life* itself, what is the hidden force without which the nicely adapted substances are mere collections of chemicals? Apparently we know a great deal about every factor except the one which somehow animates and uses them all.

Likewise with the phenomena of healing. One may easily describe the general conditions of healing, the experience of "becoming open to spiritual power," of directing this power to the patient through concentration or suggestion, as well as the physiological process accompanying the mental change. But are we not a bit hasty when, neglecting the real point at issue, we confidently affirm that one factor in particular has wrought the cure? This favourite factor of ours—faith, auto-suggestion, telepathy, "the prayer of silence," or what not—like that of a drug heralded as a great specific, may have been but the last in a long chain of helpful causes, which played only the culminating part. Or, the case might have been like that mentioned by Dr. Hillis in a sermon on healing:

"In Iowa a gentleman at whose home a reception was given wheeled out to the porch the chair of his mother, who had not taken a step for many years. During the gayeties of the evening a hanging lamp fell with a crash to the floor. When the flames had been subdued and

quiet restored, the mother was found standing in the room, having lost her rheumatism and her pain. Years before nature had cured the ailment; but the woman waited for some event or person to rouse the dormant will. Had some scientist or faith healer or theosophist happened along, a cure almost miraculous would have lent the healer great fame."

Obviously, the question of credit must be set aside, for at best the healer is but an agent of the therapeutic power. "We amuse the patient, while nature heals the disease," said a wise French physician, speaking for his profession. Admittedly, the therapeutic experience is rich in problems and interests. In order to return a full answer to the question, What is it that heals? one must take into account the entire theory of the omnipresent Wisdom, the idealistic interpretation of human experience, the higher faculties of the human soul, and the subtler mental influences which the therapeutic experience brings into view. But even then the account would be incomplete, for the point of view is confessedly that of the inner life, whereas there is much to be said in regard to the resident forces and instincts of the physical organism. There is, in fact, no brief answer to the question.

Our best course will be to consider a number of typical cases and examine them in detail, in order to discover the various factors. We at once conclude that the day of mere generalisation has passed. For example, diseases can no more be classed under

one head as "errors of the mind" than as physical "entities." If disease were simply a "belief," another belief might easily destroy it. If it were defined, as a mental-healing devotee once defined it, as "wrong thinking," its cure would, of course, be "right thinking." In diseases of the imagination this may be true. But if, in general, beliefs were sufficient causes, how soon we would think ourselves out of existence! We have fears enough in a day to put ourselves through all the ills of life, if by simply believing we had them we could create them.

Some diseases may have as little foundation in truth as the suggestions which caused the death of the English criminal in the instance so often referred to, and some diseases may be cured by simple suggestion. On the other hand, a man's entire mode of life may be involved, so that nothing less than a complete change of thought and conduct will suffice. It is clear that one must admit all the facts which the regular physician would describe as the symptoms and physical conditions of disease, as well as the states and influences upon which the mental therapist places stress. The physician deems the physical facts so important that, as a rule, he defines disease as physical, and regards the condition of mind as a sort of secondary accompaniment. The mental practitioner usually lays so much stress on the state of mind that he regards the bodily disorder as an "effect." But the rational mind-curer is as ready to acknowledge the one set of facts as the other. It is precisely because disease is far

more than a "belief," and despite the fact that it is often chiefly physical, that he claims to have wrought such wonderful cures. It is because he finds a subconscious condition that is fundamental to the physical disorder that he is able to reach cases where other methods have failed. Having admitted all the facts, he reserves the right to interpret them in his own way. He then defines disease as a state of the whole individual—beliefs, fears, sensations, subconscious conditions, habits, dispositions, and physical conditions being included under this general definition.

To say with some mental therapists that "germs are thoughts" is to be as fanciful as to declare that disease is due to obsession. Any notion concerning disease, such as the theory that it springs from a disordered stomach, is of slight moment, inasmuch as the student of the inner life seeks a more fundamental cause. That some diseases may have a certain course to run is also a minor matter, although it is interesting to note that the stages succeed one another more rapidly under mental treatment. Whether germs or other contagious elements have played their part or not is not now the question. Of greater consequence is the fact that a susceptible person is more readily cured of a severe malady than an obstinate individual is relieved of some slight ailment. The attempt to trace an exact series of "mental causes" for all diseases has failed because it is not so much a question of these alleged causes upon which mental therapists

place stress as of the individual life in which they are grounded. If neither the disease nor its cure can be described apart from the temperamental history of the individual, one may very well forego all generalisation in favour of minute study of the most interior conditions.

Let us, then, take a typical case and consider the factors of cure in the patient. Our typical sufferer is troubled, we will say, by some malady which originated, among other conditions, through nervous shock, fear, haunting mental pictures, or other psychical event which threw the inner life into discord. The first disturbance was very likely of slight consequence, and might have arisen either from without or from within; but through misinterpretation of the sensation of pain, lack of self-control, and ignorance of inner resources it has been developed into a serious affair. It is also probable that the disease is one which the regular physician confesses his inability to cure. For usually those who make trial of the mental cure turn to it as a last resort. They have lost faith in drugs and physical methods of treatment, and this is an advantage in favour of the mental therapist. They are uncertain in regard to the new method, but are at least willing to test it. This is also an aid, for receptivity makes the healer's task easier. Some, indeed, try the mental method merely to please their friends, or simply as an experiment. Receptivity is not an absolute essential, and some of the most notable cures have been wrought where there was no faith

at the outset. Again, men have been cured of the drink habit, for example, who were unaware that they were receiving mental treatment. But conscious receptivity and faith are usually factors, and if such conditions are lacking there must at least be unconscious receptivity, affinity, or willingness of some sort. In many cases there is, no doubt, sub-conscious co-operation.

Receptivity, then, we may set down as ordinarily the most potent factor on the patient's part. The sufferer's temperament, as we have briefly noted, is another factor. From the intuitive healer's point of view, patients are found to vary all the way from those who present a solid front of rigidity such that they dispute every inch of the way, to those who are so pliable that one must avoid giving too long or too powerful a treatment. Children are ordinarily very receptive. The same is true of elderly people. A healer once said of an aged woman that he had merely to "point his finger at her, as it were," in order to help her mentally. On the other hand, a combative person, one who raises objections from first to last, is likely to present a mental atmosphere which is no less difficult to overcome. An extremely "hard-headed" man once received treatment from three successful therapists without responding in the least to their most positive work. In general, the degree of receptivity, and consequently the character of the mental atmosphere which the intuitive healer discerns, varies with the type of individual, the organism, and the habit of life.



Further, the same conditions of social relationship obtain in the interior world as in the general world of ordinary experience. The same laws and affinities also hold. A person to whom one would not naturally become receptive in ordinary acquaintanceship would be undesirable as a mental healer. The same good sense that preserves us from cranks and from the unprincipled will guard the mind from all that is objectionable in the inner world if we are equally on the alert. The instances are extremely few where a superior person has been made more ill by becoming receptive to an inferior healer. Furthermore, the sort of receptivity here described is not openness to personal influence, for that might be a mere mixture of atmospheres; it is readiness to be healed by the power of the Spirit.

Doubtless auto-suggestion in the form of expectant attention is often a factor. The healer requests the new patient to take a comfortable physical attitude and endeavour to become receptive. Explanations are also made in regard to the results that may be expected. Doubtless, too, the receptivity is akin to hypnosis, which is described by Dr. H. A. Parkyn as "a state of mental quiescence in which the suggestion of the operator has an exaggerated effect on the mind of the subject." In such a state even the absurd denials of the Christian Scientist, *e. g.*, "You have no headache," "You have no head," are as effective as gospel truth if the mind accepts them. But the analogy soon ceases when we compare hypnotism with spiritual healing. The spiritual

therapist is eager above all else to establish *the truth*. Hence there is no desire either to deny facts or to take advantage of the patient's receptivity.

In many cases the desire to be healed is a factor so favourable that the patient can well afford to take advantage of the advice given by the healer in regard to receptivity and mental co-operation. Occasionally the patient's faith is sufficient to accomplish a large part of the work. Sometimes a patient will write for "absent help" at a time when the therapist is unable to meet the appointment, but so familiar is the patient with the requirements that the right conditions will be observed and relief will come without aid from any other source. Again, former patients will ask leave to come occasionally to sit in the chair where they have received treatment, as they then found it easier to become self-helpful. Ideally speaking, to become as receptive as a little child is to be ready to be healed of any trouble. Again, the recipient of spiritual help ought to be able to respond as readily to spiritual truth as the injured animal to the healing power of nature, the hypnotic subject to the suggestions of the operator, or the credulous person to the therapeutic assertions of the abstract mental healer. As matter of fact, however, the conditions become more complex as we ascend the scale of intelligence. Receptivity is by no means the determining factor in the majority of cases. There is no reason for the assumption sometimes made that all healing is really self-healing.

2. When we have given credit to the factors of cure in the patient—desire to be healed, faith, receptivity, auto-suggestion, and the rest—what shall we say of those cases in which all this is insufficient, and the patient is restored to health through the agency of a spiritual healer? Let us return to our typical case of the person who, receptive and willing, but unable to do more than aid the restorative process in a very slight way, comes for silent treatment. What are the factors on the healer's side?

In the first place, there is desire to heal, sympathy, a longing to play one's part in nature's wonderful process. The healer has also been a sufferer, has found relief by mental means, and grown into knowledge of spiritual power. He knows, too, what it is to be in bondage to fear, to physical conditions, and physical remedies. He is not a believer in disease as an entity that is liable to seize upon the organism from without, regardless of an inviting condition springing from an inner cause. He believes that suffering is neither an affliction nor a necessity, but a condition brought about through ignorance, wrong modes of thought and life; and that one may learn to meet life so as to avoid illness altogether. He therefore regards the problem of disease as part of the general problem of life, depending for its solution upon a changed mental attitude such that an experience which might once have seemed a curse will prove a blessing. Accordingly, he aims to bring about a wiser attitude on the part of the patient.

This result is usually accomplished in part through audible explanation: for example, if the patient is uncharitable, or is suffering from suppressed grief. But almost invariably the process of cure begins with the silent treatment, and explanations are not made until after the first few sittings. Again, much light is often thrown upon the case by the patient's own account of it. But it is not usual to permit the patient to narrate the case at will. To rehearse the symptoms and describe the details is to refresh the troubles, fears, and mental pictures connected with the illness. The past is passed, and the patient should be concerned solely with the present and the future. But when the healer has intuitively diagnosed the case and discerned the inner causes, the patient can often be questioned with profit.

If intuitive, then, the healer asks no questions at first and makes few explanations. The patient has come in the willing attitude already described. The healer sits near the patient and asks him to become quiet and receptive, in a comfortable position. The patient is not to force himself to be still, but simply to be restfully expectant, dismissing as far as possible all thought of the past, without fear that there is anything uncanny or mysterious in the treatment.

The healer then turns away in thought from the external world, excludes consciousness of sensation as far as possible, and for the moment is even oblivious of the patient's presence. For the mind must first be prepared, consecrated afresh, before seeking light upon the case at hand. The moment

of consecration is akin to prayer or worship, as if the soul ascended a mountain from which the entire world could be surveyed. As a rule, those who find difficulty in concentrating must discipline themselves in the various stages of "ascent." But after a time it is matter of habit to detach the consciousness from all that is mundane and send it aloft, as it were, in aspiration. The entire philosophy of the omnipresent Wisdom here comes into play. That Wisdom is, of course, ever with the soul awaiting recognition. Any elevating thought, such as the realisation of the divine love and care, enables the mind to renew the sense of relationship with God. One does not, of course, try to use the power of the Spirit, but rather to put the soul in an attitude such that it will partake of the wisdom that is ever ready to shine, manifest the power that is ever ready to guide and to heal. It is well not to commit oneself to a set formula, for it is the spirit, not the form, that is essential. Yet oftentimes the same realisation, such as "In him we live and move and have our being," is the most helpful means of upliftment; and the healer frequently turns to the patient in the same spirit of command: "Peace, be still!"

The first essential, then, is to absent oneself from the world of physical sensation, and enter into renewed realisation of the inmost life of the soul. To help a soul in bondage one must rise above the level of mere sympathetic interchange, however close the affinity with the patient. For the moment, therefore, one can well afford to forget the

life here below and enter into the spiritual world. To enter that world once more is to feel a sense of power, of freedom and joy, and of enlargement, as if one were entering into harmony with every living thing. Then the sentiment of worship becomes more particularly a prayer for guidance for the present case. The remainder of the experience takes its clue from this specific consecration.

Having once more entered into the higher realm of the spiritual life and become centred there, one is in a position to turn in thought to the needy soul in an attitude of command, ready to utter the word of power. If one could maintain this ideal attitude with great calmness and firmness it would scarcely be necessary to give specific attention to the patient's problem. But until the sense of union with the spiritual world becomes very strong it is necessary to give attention to various stages of the therapeutic experience, and adopt various methods, all of which may be regarded as introductory.

In the first place, the intuitive healer discovers his clue by coming in contact with the "atmosphere" of the patient. It is this atmosphere more than anything else that reveals the inmost condition of the organism, the interior mental causes, and the temperamental attitude. The atmospheres vary according to the case and according to the condition of the patient at different times. The ability to read and to be guided by the atmosphere, of course, develops with experience, and the more acute the healer's insight into it the more likely is he to adapt

the treatment to the actual needs of the patient. Whether the treatment shall be soothing or positive, long or short, depends also upon the clue which the atmosphere gives, the response which is aroused when the healer turns in thought towards the sufferer.

In the endeavour to bring life and power to the patient, there is no attempt to transfer thought to the patient's consciousness, no attempt to control the patient's mind. The thought, whatever it may be, serves rather to give definiteness to the healer's realisation, to absorb and direct the consciousness; it is *the spiritual activity* thus made concrete that is of consequence. In the case of one who, for example, presents an excited, nervous atmosphere, it is the healer's province to bring down a gentle, soothing atmosphere which shall still the troubled sea of nervous activity, and from which the patient shall absorb according to his need. The imagination is, of course, serviceable in this connection, and naturally there is a tendency or current of thought playing round about the central idea and filling it out into completeness of realisation. But it is the dynamic attitude, the fundamental activity, which directly affects the patient. To give centrality to this activity is to be able to play one's humble part in a wonderful process which is very far from being merely personal, or merely mental. The spiritual healer is not, then, himself the all-powerful mind or factor; he is the willing instrument of the higher Power. His first desire is to become

spiritually receptive and free, and then to turn in thought to the patient that the same freedom may be shared or bestowed.

If, therefore, one uses certain passages of Scripture in order to maintain the thought in the right direction it should be remembered that the words are only a stepping-stone to a higher consciousness. It is not the word or thought that is the reality; it is *the living essence* which the word or thought suggests. That essence or Spirit is ever with us. God is here within, inseparable from the soul; and when the soul feels the divine presence it possesses the essence itself and has no need of words.

The first step, let me repeat, is to direct the consciousness toward the omnipresent Spirit, to become peaceful, quiet, poised, *master of the situation*; then, when one is thus open and free, to turn to the sufferer, carrying the same gentle yet strong and stimulating influence, enveloping him with an atmosphere so powerful that no inharmonious condition either of mind or body can long withstand it. It is well established that the power thus directed towards the patient meets resistance where the sufferer is in discord; that is, the organism is free, responsive, except in particular regions; there the healing power meets an obstacle. Nature is trying to restore equilibrium, and meets opposition at this restricted point. Even if one knows nothing about the patient's trouble at the outset, the healing experience will soon reveal the location of it, because one's consciousness, directed toward the patient,



will meet this obstruction, and the healing power will bear down upon it until gradually the condition begins to change. The thought of the healer directs the power where it is most needed, and holds it there persistently, with the idea, of course, that the condition is gradually changing, that the patient is giving up his fears, haunting mental pictures, and painful consciousness of sensation, and becoming open to the healing power. This is continued until an impression is made, until enough has been accomplished to start the right reaction, and then the work continues subconsciously after the treatment is finished.

The healer, then, is like the person with good sight who offers kindly assistance to a blind man. The man with good sight sees the way open before him as he proceeds, and therefore steps along confidently. And in this same spirit of confidence one should guide the sufferer because one knows the way, because of what one knows about the human mind, the power of thought, the nature of disease, and the rich possibilities of our spiritual existence. One should not dwell upon symptoms and doubts, but see the *outcome*, think of the patient as *he ought to be*, in good health, poised, calm, and strong. One should be stronger in the *right* direction than the sufferer is in the other, penetrating persistently to the very core of the disturbance, opening it out and expanding it, until the new life is started up with a thrill throughout the organism.

3. Here the question arises, Does the healer

really open the mind to an external power which is then directed toward the patient, or is this power *resident* in the healer? Or, assuming that there is a definite suggestion given, or a thought transferred to the patient, does this thought simply quicken the dormant healing power in the patient? Probably many healers would maintain that power or life is actually absorbed from without by the healer. At any rate, a state of mind is aroused which it is desirable for the patient to receive the benefit of subconsciously. Whether there be a definite thought process, or simply the consciousness of concentrating power toward the patient, the result is evidently the same; that is, the thought probably does not travel: it is the motion or vibration which is transferred, probably through a substance finer than the ether in which our minds are bathed. And if the healing power is omnipresent there is no question of outside and inside, the essential being the establishment of a centre of activity of that power in the patient.

We may then consider the healing power as potentially resident in both healer and patient. It may even be in a state of tension in the patient—the natural tendency of the organism to right itself—the pain being a sign that this tendency is interfered with by wrong treatment, fear, nervousness, the effort to bear the pain. The spiritual treatment removes this opposition, and co-operates with nature by giving the mind a healthier direction and hastening the activity of the healing power.

It is essential to remember that there is a higher nature craving expression, a latent ideal toward which the powers of our being are persistently striving. If the patient is unaware of this evolutionary process, this tendency toward the perfect, the power is resisted and confined, and suffering results. If one is undeveloped on the affectional side of one's nature, if the intellect is uncultivated, or if one is in need of physical exercise, then this undeveloped or one-sided region is the seat of creative activity. Nature is striving through us to realise a type, to actualise a rounded-out ideal. She is irresistibly persistent in this endeavour, and if she cannot make an impression upon us by gentle means she must resort to something vigorous or painful. There is a sort of natural rhythm of development, like the steady rise and fall of the steamer over the waves of mid-ocean. Those who are well rounded out move with it. Those who are unfinished in any particular meet it with resistance. The effort, therefore, both in helping another and in self-help, should be to co-operate with this natural process. This may be done by trying to picture the spiritual ideal. Dismiss the thought of yourself as you have been, and hold in mind the rounded-out ideal.

All this, of course, relates to the secondary process, that which is more accurately describable as natural and mental. In so far as it is a question of the *spiritual* factor one does not assume to control or direct that. One is aware that one dwells in a

purser region, that a higher life-giving Power is present. To the extent that one feels this ennobling Life it is not a question of here or there, or of communication of life as if one were the originative agent. It is rather a question of "wonder, love, and praise." Hence one reserves a place for the higher phase of the experience under the head of values, worths, ideals. Into that ideal region mere science cannot enter. It is not a time for cold analysis, but for silence and receptivity, recognition and co-operation.

4. But how, you ask, does this realisation of the divine ideal and of the soul's oneness with God reach or affect the patient and produce a corresponding state? Probably the best illustration of this secondary phase of the therapeutic experience is its comparison with the transfer of sound vibration. When two pianos are in adjoining rooms, if a note on one is struck the corresponding chord on the other will vibrate. Likewise in human speech. The will or desire on my part to communicate with you causes my ideas to take shape in language which you understand, a process is set up in my brain, transmitted to the vocal cords, and thus by vibration to your ear, and finally to your consciousness. Your understanding of what I say is precisely dependent on the attention which you give to it, the receptivity to it, and the sympathy of experience. If you have entered the silence and communed with God, you know what I mean. If not, my words convey little or nothing to you; for it is

the experience or consciousness which counts, not the words.

Now, in the healing process the communication is very much simplified, although still of a vibratory character. You are receptive, and need help; and I desire to help you. We sit down together and enter into sympathy mentally. I do not try to force my thought upon you, but you give me your attention. The sympathy between us has annihilated space; and as I turn aside from the outer world and rise to the plane of spiritual silence or divine communion, your mind consciously or subconsciously receives the benefit of my realisation, through this sympathetic receptivity. You may feel nothing at the time, but work has been done. A seed has been sown in the subconscious mind, where it will germinate and do good. In other words, work has been done, the healing power has been directed to the disturbed region, and the results will be consciously made known in due course.

Mentally speaking, the essential is the ideal direction of consciousness, with the accompanying activity. To transfer the attention is to focus the activities around the newly chosen centre, hence to redirect the subconscious life. The conscious part is the establishment of the new dynamic attitude: the subconscious part is the consequent readjustment. Again, the conscious part may be characterised as a question of placing allegiance. Shall we live in the consciousness of sensation, of self, in

memory of the past, in trouble, fear, worriment, in matter and circumstance? Or shall we dwell upon the end to be reached through all this process, the larger self, the spirit, the inner, the real, or eternal? Shall we seek the kingdom of heaven that all else may come, or seek first *things*, hoping that the kingdom may be added? The mind is limited in power and must choose, for there is literally no room both for trouble and for trust. Either I am to look upon myself as all-important and try to have things circulate about *me*, or I am to regard the Spirit as first. To lose self that one may find it is, in fact, the essence of spiritual healing; for invariably there is too great consciousness of self whenever there is illness and trouble.

You may reply that you know it, that you would rise above sensation if you could; but you have become lethargic, you have lost ambition, and seem unable to help yourself. Still the truth remains, that if you wish to be better *you must make some effort*, you must break away. And when this higher consciousness comes—the intuition of life's wholeness, its beauty, its system, and meaning—there comes with it a sense of contentment, of joy in existence which nothing can destroy; and heart, mind, and body are healed by recognition of one's union with the spirit and love of God.

5. There has been considerable discussion at various times in regard to what it is that heals. Some mental therapists have insisted that all cures grouped under the general head of mental healing

are due to hypnotism. Others have declared that suggestion is the fundamental law, even in cases where the healer claimed to use purely "spiritual" power. Still others have said that in *spiritual* healing there is neither hypnotism nor thought transference, that suggestion is not the prime factor, but "spiritual power" does the work. There has been much dogmatism, and very little attempt to find a common basis. Those who have practised hypnotic methods have claimed to know that there is nothing in spiritual healing which they do not experience; while the spiritual healer has been equally sure that his work exemplifies a higher element. But a few simple considerations show that these representatives of opposing schools are not so far apart.

It is undoubtedly true that there is a higher type of experience which the hypnotist and the merely mental healer do not enjoy.<sup>1</sup> It would be useless to deny that. It is only a question of finding the relationship between lower and higher methods. It is also clear from the foregoing that the various claims in regard to the power of merely human thought as the chief factor have been largely astray. The healer who says, "It is I who heal," and the one who insists that mere thought heals, have not yet begun to think fundamentally. For it is necessary, first of all, to insist that healing is a process of restoration of the natural organism, an organism

<sup>1</sup> Hence the term "spiritual healing" is inclusive of all that is meant by "mental healing," although exclusive of some of the conditions of hypnotism.

which exhibits laws far superior to anything which man has devised.

The tendency to regain health is exceedingly strong. All the necessary powers are there. Healing, then, let us repeat, is, in the first place, *a natural process*. It may be aided in many ways, but the process is the all-important thing. For the process is necessarily resident in the organism. If man followed nature as fully as the animals do, little outside help would be required. Most healing methods of human devising are artifices invented to overcome the obstructions which man has reared. There is no reason to set up claims for one's self as a healer. Man ought to be glad that he has found a way out of the errors and faults into which he has fallen. Man ought to be ashamed to be ill, in view of the marvellous provisions of nature.

But, in the next place, it should be willingly conceded that the general basis of merely mental treatment is the same. It is doubtful if any mental healer fully knows how he does his work. He has theories, but theories may have little relation to facts. The most he can say is that, in some wonderful way, a certain psychical activity on his part is a factor in a very much larger process which includes manifold workings in the subconscious life. The psycho-physical process is probably the same in all kinds of mental treatment, from lowest to highest. There is a communication from healer to patient. Call it "vibration," if you will. Call it "suggestion," or telepathy. Some healers know



far more about the way in which the communication is made than others whose theories are no less positive. But the chief thing is the communication, and the fact is that this aids nature in the removal of obstructions. Some sort of psycho-physical process in which the healer's activity plays a part is the common basis. This communication is found alike in hypnotic mental transference and in religious healing.

In addition to the psycho-physical process there may be an added religious element, so that the spiritual healer is right in his claims that a higher consciousness is at work. Granted the line of communication between healer and patient, the healer may attach himself to any current he likes. Granted the activity of a higher current, the entire healing experience takes on a higher character. But the point is, that this higher region is *an added realm*, a realm of values and ideals. To one who holds these ideals, they are naturally all-important; and it is not for the hypnotist to say that the higher region does not exist, or that the higher consciousness plays no part. When he calmly stops to consider the matter, he cannot deny that the law is the same as that which all religious experience exemplifies. The question of fact is one point, the question of values is another.<sup>1</sup> Precisely the same experience may be stated in terms of values or in terms of fact, in terms of religious experience or in strictly scien-

<sup>1</sup> This distinction is of fundamental importance, if one is to discern the empirical reality of mind-cure practice.

tific terms. It is possible to describe the average mental-healing experience without any reference to religious matters, and that description is true—as far as it goes. But it is equally true that for the one who is filled with religious consciousness a great many more things are also true.

6. In religious terms, let us say, then, that true healing means to trust God more, to love more, to become at peace, to get out of self, to understand self. It comes by laying fear aside through aspiration, by becoming adjusted to the body and to one's environment. It is not mere personal influence: it is helpfulness, it is love, it is sacred. It is not the giving of one's own strength and health. It does not exhaust. It is mutually helpful and renewing to healer and patient.

It is helpful for a group of people to sit in the silence, as though one should say to the rest: Peace, let us be still within, and commune with that Presence of which all life is a sharing, to which all conduct should be a helpful witness. Whatever calamity may come to us in the future, let it come when it must: it were better that we should not foreknow it. Each of you will probably go away from here when our silence is broken; but at present why not lose all sense of time until the hour has come? This bit of existence is infinitely small and trivial; but in some way it fits into the great universe, and unites us with all that lives. Eternity is here as surely as anywhere or in any time. Life is a great unbroken whole; and from the centre of

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each consciousness, as if it were the heart of being, the uplifting influences of thought and love extend to the uttermost confines of the whole. Each of us exists within, and yet is not identical with the Supreme Spirit, so that for each He is personally the Father. For each He has provided in that wonderful way of perfect wisdom which establishes the limit, sees the end, implants the ideal, yet leaves freedom for all to think and have experience, freedom to sin, until at last in the fulness of time we shall awaken from ignorance, learn the wisdom of experience, and choose the life of devotion to the highest.

From this present trouble of ours there is a way of escape. Self alone stands in the way. Yet even this is no ground for complaint. If we are rightly adjusted to the creative rhythm or process, we shall not be troubled by it longer than is necessary to teach us its lesson. Then let us be content. Let us drop fear and impatience in quiet trust and restfulness. Peace, be still! There is nothing to fear. Nothing can come to us without receptivity or willingness on our part. We therefore hold the keys to our minds. We can accomplish everything through faith, with sufficient time.

We are not responsible for the universe, nor for the lives of any of its people. We cannot fully explain our belief in the goodness of things; but the belief is there, and the only fault seems to be that we do not trust more. We cannot tell fully why we believe in God. It may seem audacious

even to speak of Him as though we had penetrated life's secret far enough to describe our oneness with Him. But here again we apparently err only because we do not live more in the thought of Him. This deep, fundamental basis of life is the permanent substance, or being, which goes forth as the word, or spirit, and expresses itself through all the changes of form, of space, and time.

This present, passing experience—life as you and I live it—is such a going forth, partaking of the living essence of God. It does not proceed at random, but is directed by perfect wisdom and love. Every part is adjusted to every other part, and all parts are governed by the one central purpose which makes the universe a realm of law and order. That which guides and inspires is sufficient for all needs. There is no opposing power to break and mar the creative process. All is steady march. No fact, no experience, no thought, lies outside the whole. In each fact, each thought, the whole is reproduced in miniature. One need not travel to find the whole. But everywhere, in ever-changing forms and in ever-fresh experience, the one Law, the one Life, the one Spirit, or Wisdom, is again and again reproduced.

## CHAPTER IX

### METHODS OF HEALING

**I**T is clear from the foregoing that it is extremely difficult to characterise the therapeutic experience so that it shall seem real to one who has not already participated in it. Nearly always when such descriptions are given there are those who say that for them there is much that is intangible. Thus must it be until one has put the principle to the test and verified the method. The missing element is the empirical factor, the peculiar quality of the experience. One should not expect to have this imparted. The description is of the letter; it is the experience that is spiritual. All that a description can hope to achieve is to convey hints, as one might poetically set forth one's inmost sentiment respecting "the everlasting realities of religion." Those realities may possess great intellectual value, and to this extent be subject to the most precise analysis. But their spiritual values are essentially matters of experience: one must enter the holy of holies and adore in order to know them.

Probably in the majority of cases the method is first acquired by the aid of a mental process; that is, the experimenter carries on a sort of argument,

or series of affirmations, with the general ideal of health in view. Here, for example, is an outline statement of such a method, from the lecture notes already referred to in Chapter V. After a few preliminary explanations, the exposition begins with the supposition that the healer is seated by the patient, the latter receptive, the former filled with the consciousness of "the truth of the patient's being"; and continues as follows:

"Now suppose you realise that God is everywhere, therefore that He fills this room, surrounds the patient, even fills him without his knowing it. Then go on from that point to realise what God would be and feel in the patient's place—calm, without fear. Therefore, think of the patient as losing his fear, serene and at peace. . . . God is perfect health, therefore the patient is feeling the healing effect of His presence in every part of his being. God is perfect wisdom and action in every way, therefore the patient is yielding to the better way, to the wisdom that is coming in as a part of himself. Regard the patient as seeing for himself wherein he is weak and unwise. See him realising the better way of perfect wisdom, now coming into consciousness as his own thought of improvement. See this especially in so far as you may have learned wherein the patient has caused his trouble by un wisdom.

"Another way of thinking: Imagine God the Father, the eternal power, infinite wisdom and love, as a person looking more fully and consciously into the patient's mind [than you can look] and saying to him, 'You are perfect in your physical design, and only interfere with

it by your undeveloped character and unwise ways and fears. Now have peace. Feel my perfect design in every organ and function. See everything within you as perfect. Your illness, your inharmony is only the result of your mistakes. Have peace. Let these errors go, and be at peace, and wiser. I am your wisdom, your very life and strength, your intelligence and power. Let me have you perfectly. Then your perfection will be gained in all ways, and on each plane of your being.'

"Now what is the effect of these thoughts of yours? Your patient has been gaining, and he will be conscious of the improvement later. . . . He may have been thinking of his unwise conduct—that which caused his trouble or illness—and seeing the foolishness of such ways and thinking he will certainly be wiser. I have caused such thoughts many a time in the mind of a patient. Not that I thought precisely what he did, but that his thoughts resulted from my realisation: he saw in part for himself what I more fully realised for him.

"Now is this practical or visionary? Let your own thought answer. God is our life and wisdom and power. He is *living* us and developing us all the time to be more like Him, that is, to become wiser and stronger individuals, more loving and better in every way. . . . In the silent treatment there is much of that developing and growing in a short time. That new development is displacing the state of mind and body that was the patient's disease. . . .

"When everything is arranged as here for a treatment—the recipient intentionally receptive and open, desiring help; and the sender positive, and thinking the kind of thoughts which of all others have the most power—work is sure to be done. . . . You cannot afford to doubt

it, and thus hinder an effect that must in a measure take place inevitably . . . a result that is as inevitable as the sunshine from a luminary that cannot keep its sunshine back. . . . God's creatures must get it [spiritual help] unavoidably, and they cannot prevent it. That is why you cannot afford to doubt. The simple fact that you and your patient arrange for such work being done shows that some effect will be inevitable. Minds together mingle, unavoidably. . . . If an intelligent direction is given to the thought [the power] that is going to do the work, the result will be greater. In proportion to the patient's receptivity, also, and his confidence and faith in the power of this way of being helped, will the result be greater. . . . As a practitioner's understanding increases and his intuitions develop, and as he becomes active more and more on the Godward side of his work—out of himself and the human way of thinking—so his effectiveness will increase."

The intellect is likely to raise manifold objections to such a "realisation," on the ground that it involves a confusion of ideas. But such reflections are not meant to be formally defensible; there is no thought of possible pantheistic implications. The object is to absorb the consciousness in the thought of the divine presence, since no other realisation is therapeutically so effectual. To one who enters fully into the spirit of such a reflection, God alone seems to exist. It is not strange, then, that one sometimes hears a spiritual healer say, in a voice filled with reverence, "It is all God." Strictly speaking, however, what is meant is that man is a



“medium of God,” that he possesses no spiritual power wholly his own. For a moment, the consciousness of self is wholly in abeyance. For the moment, too, the idea of health is practically synonymous with that of perfection. What other meanings the idea of God may have are not now in question. The essential is to absorb mind and heart in one great uplifting realisation of the divine presence.

Obviously, the ability to enter into the fulness of such a consciousness depends upon the previous acceptance of the theology implied in it. For there is a great difference between regarding oneself as a centre of life and power, and regarding man as at best a recipient of wisdom and love from “the giver of every perfect gift.” This is a cardinal point in the doctrine of the present book. Mr. Quimby, as we have seen, took no credit to himself. In the chapter on “The Omnipresent Wisdom” we have seen that this principle is carried so far as to imply that man has no good quality of his own. This conclusion was taken wholly in earnest by the Quimby devotees, hence their good works. It leads to consecration, service, worship, hence to deeds of love. It is not strange, then, that out of the therapeutic belief and practice there grew an entire philosophy of life, taking its clue from this central and essentially Christian principle.

Nor is it strange that most devotees of this teaching have found it far easier at first to help others by the silent method than to help themselves. The

therapeutic experience is primarily social rather than individual. It is a recognition not merely of our utter dependence upon God, but of the great truth that we are "members one of another." Hence the statement quoted above, that two people cannot sit down together, the one desiring help, the other longing to give it, without producing a beneficial effect, has in many cases proved to be the clinching argument, the one that has encouraged the beginner to make trial of the method.

Nevertheless, the same principle applies with equal force to the individual. If "God and one make a majority," to enter into conscious oneness with the Father is to experience the blessings of divine sonship. In order to make this realisation very vivid, one may regard one's higher self as the healer, one's disordered self as the patient, and objectify the problem to be solved. In this way one may, for the time being, transcend the consciousness of sensation, lift all active thought to the higher level, and give oneself over to a detailed realisation of what it means to be a child of God. To do this in all humility and receptivity is in very truth to feel that the soul is at best merely an instrument, guided sustained, carried forward at every point. Hence the self that one "affirms" is the individuality through which the ever-present Father is fulfilling a purpose. One prays that that purpose, whatever it may be, shall be achieved. One is ready to do the work that is given, to meet the circumstances at hand, learn the lesson of the present conflict.

Hence no complaint is uttered. There is no sense of impatience, no desire to run away from the given situation. Instead, there is a sense of peace, of quiet restfulness, and thankfulness. One does not expect to solve the present problem by itself. One sees that it is inwrought with the whole of life, just as one's mere self is related to a larger whole. Therefore one seeks, above all, the truth of the general situation, and, in the light of this, the wisdom which applies to the case in hand.

If one could always attain this sense of peace and adjustment, if one could maintain it with calm persistence, no other method of self-help would be needed. This adjustment is the ideal, and it should ever be held before the mind. But as it is sometimes less easy to mount the supernal heights than at others it is well to know of other methods, regarded as introductory to this. It is an aid, for example, to dismiss all care, remove all nervous tension, and quietly settle down into the living present, with no effort to attain or to aspire. One therefore reminds oneself that one cannot achieve all ends at once, that to become rounded-out means to take up one tendency after another and lead it into line. One endeavours to come to judgment in the moment of life that just now is. One frankly acknowledges what has been accomplished, what remains to be done. One makes no claims, one makes no promises. The plain, unvarnished truth is what one wishes.

Thus to enter restfully into the rich life of the

moment, and find one's centre, is to learn by contrast that ordinarily there is astonishing waste of force. One becomes aware, for example, that there has often been ecstatic straining after ideals, a nervous outreaching towards the future in fear and anxiety. Or, there has, perhaps, been constant and foolish worry over financial affairs, absurd fears concerning one's health, distrust in regard to family welfare, or the health of friends. Again, there has been a fluctuation of desires, the longing to be somewhere else, the wish that something stirring might happen. The constant mental unrest has been accompanied by a no less constant waste of nervous force. To become conscious of this state of affairs is to realise at last how slight is one's self-control, how little repose there is at the centre, how little enjoyment of life in the truer sense of the word. To find one's centre, and to remove the tension, is to begin at last to conserve mental power and physical force, and to prepare the way for more wisely organised activity.

To experience the joy and beauty of this realisation, put yourself entirely into the living present, trustfully, restfully, calmly. Regard yourself as an immortal soul, with all eternity before you. Time is just now of no consequence, or at best a mere matter of convenience. Space, too, has little present meaning for the soul. There is no place in the wide universe where there is more wisdom and power than here, in this wonderfully rich present. The God of wisdom is here. Here is centred all

life. Here dwells the Father, unlimited by space, unhampered by time. You are eternally related to the Father. You stand for some aspect of His wisdom and power which no one else can represent as well. Your entire experience is an awakening into recognition of this great life-purpose. The conditions by which you are environed are the wisest for you. When you have entered into the meaning of the present round of experiences a new cycle will dawn. Peace, then! be at home in the eternal domain of the soul; trust and be receptive to the divine guidance. Do not coerce the soul, but grant it freedom to grow. Brush aside all doubts, fears, anxieties, and personal plans; return to the spiritual spontaneities and follow the clue of the latest promptings. Let nature and the subconscious mind do their utmost, while you devote your actively conscious thought to the realisation of the divine presence, to ways and means of making that presence known among your fellow-men.

Few methods are more effectual than this. Let the past be whatever it may have been. Let the outer universe be as real as it may. Let the future have in store what it may. Whatever the burden, however foolish you may have been, however far short of the ideal your conduct may fall—here you are, an individual soul. The whole of your experience centres about this moment of philosophic contemplation. At the centre the soul sits and gazes, in all calmness at last, discovering that life is spiritual. When thus contemplative the soul is able to

trace to the fountain-head many a line of conduct, see from what alternatives the conduct originated, what might have resulted had the choice been different. Farther back is seen the prevalent mental attitude whence the decisions sprang. Then the law becomes clear that if future conduct is to be wiser there must be more thoughtfulness, hence more repose, hence more self-control; in short, that the soul's attitude must be changed.

Thus, to trace conduct to its centre and discover the true resource is to see that out of a decisive dynamic attitude there spring multiform results not directly under the control of the will. Hence it is clear that the establishment of a new centre of equilibrium is the prime essential. Since the undesirable present has sprung by degrees from an unfortunate attitude of long standing, the new future must be created, not by tearing down the present product, but by gradually centring the life around a wiser attitude, a nobler outlook.

This shifting of attention is much the same in its effect as though one were to turn the body squarely around and walk in the opposite direction. The activity of will is slight which causes the change, but it carries the life of the organism with it. Or, it is like an absorbing story which holds the attention so that one forgets time, place, and all else. Meanwhile, the responsive powers of the inner life are doing their best. It is important to discover this, the actual order of events in the mental world; for as we have previously noted, a

superficial psychology has sometimes put the stress elsewhere. To see that the attitude, the volitional activity, is fundamental is to put the thoughts that lead to and follow from it in their proper place.

Another essential point for many people is the injunction to begin now, not to postpone the "day of salvation." The restless, impulsive, emotionally tense individual often fails to respond to the usual affirmations. The decisive moment arrives when such a person, no longer expecting other people to relieve him of his burdens, begins to conquer by cultivating the opposite extreme. Nothing is so effective as to stop amidst a nervous flow of eloquence, a rushing tide of emotion, or whatever the intense activity may be, and, pausing for a moment, regain equilibrium, start out afresh, consciously taking each step, carefully enunciating each word. It requires much persuasion to encourage people of this type to be thus in earnest with themselves. But when at last they resolutely assume command they discover that great changes can be wrought in a short time. One man who thus took up the art of self-control so changed his nervous handwriting in a few days that his signature was not recognised at the bank. He next took up the problem of moderation in walking, and permitted every one to pass him on the street, whereas he had formerly rushed ahead at full speed. Others who have thus valiantly begun to practise what they had been preaching have found that remarkable headway

may be made in a few days in the encounter with habits of years' standing.

Again, there are individuals who are much like a sensitive plant. It is of little avail for them to make the usual mind-cure affirmations and denials. It is not so much a question of thinking as of doing. Spiritual healers may be helpful to an extent, but it is largely a question of self-help. Hence there must be more acute self-knowledge, intimate acquaintance with the initiatory stages of various lines of action. Knowledge of the inceptive stages well in hand, the next step is to pause in the very act of "closing in" at the approach of a dominating person, to stop in the act of yielding overmuch, and be strong in the higher consciousness. It is as necessary for a person so constituted to regulate the pleasures as to overcome the pains of daily life, for their very acute delight readily develops into ecstasy and emotional excitement. From all such ecstasy and withdrawal into the subjective precincts there follows a painful nervous reaction of some sort. Hence there must be great moderation at the centre, quiet contemplation, and repose, where there was once nervous wear and tear.

Such self-consciousness and analysis as this decisive change calls for would, of course, be most unpleasant, if long continued. But for many people it is absolutely essential at the outset. The change is best brought about by making a separation in thought between the soul, the permanent ego, and its passing sensations, volitions, and thoughts.



Instead of throwing the whole life into the experience at hand, instead of recounting a past bit of personal history as if one were emotionally living it over again, there will be a centre of power which is like an objective, impersonal, serene observer, undisturbed by the distant memory. Hence the past or the present will be regarded in a calm scientific light for the sake of discerning the laws implied, the lessons to be learned.

It is important for every one to be able thus to discriminate the soul—regarded as essentially ideal, aspiring to be perfect—from the conditions of its evolution. Then the past that one regrets, the memory that causes pain, the experience that causes shame, will be connected rather with the self which one used to be. For the very fact that regret and shame arise shows that the soul is already far more than once it was. Once there was only a dim consciousness of a better way, a well-nigh impotent awareness of an alternative. But now the weaker element has become the stronger; the higher alternatives have prevailed.

It is an entirely new thought to some people to reflect that there is a part of the self that is never ill, never sins. Yet one must believe this if one holds that the soul is a son of God, reared in love, sharing the divine life, never separated from the Father's care. To accept such a belief is to conclude that at heart the soul is pure, true, genuine, free, beautiful. That being so, one may very well give special thought to this conception of the soul.

One will then see that what appeared to be an enveloping fear was relatively superficial. One apparently gave way to doubt, but in deepest truth the soul remained at heart loyal, serene. The hours of pain that swept over the inner life seemed to carry everything before them, but, far within, the soul was at peace, inspired now and then by enticing glimpses through the mist of doubt. Hence one must judge, not by the experience, but by the inmost attitude. One must put together these profounder hints concerning the soul's real belief and take the erect, strong attitude which they suggest. After a time this ideal consciousness will be an ever-ready resource. At first, this consciousness will be largely passive. But in due course it can be made aggressive, until finally it will be an ever-present strength.

It is oftentimes helpful to isolate the disturbed portion of the body by assuming an attitude of quiet unconcern, and concentrating the consciousness elsewhere. Again, if the fear of some possible calamity enters the mind it is possible to turn so positively away from it that the fear immediately dies away for want of attention. One may, as it were, personify that portion of oneself which is inclined to fear, as much as to say: "Anticipate and worry, borrow trouble, if you will; meanwhile I propose to enjoy myself." Again, if you are restless at night, say to yourself: "Toss about and think as long as you choose; when you have finished I will go to sleep." Or, if your brain is over-active

in one direction when you wish to think about something else, say: "Grind away, I am content to wait in serenity." Nine times out of ten the relief is immediate, for the brain does not care to think, the mind ceases to worry when the soul is thus agreeable, for the seat of power has been moved elsewhere. One may also overcome nervous intensity by this flank movement. Start a centre of calmness somewhere else, and say: "Serene, I fold my hands and wait."

An important point to remember in connection with the rapid physical changes sometimes experienced by sensitively organised people is the fact that the sensation is usually very much exaggerated. An interior state which seems decidedly threatening may be of very minor consequence. The more interior, the more is the painful sensation emphasised. Hence the mere sensation is not a safe guide. One must judge by the general condition of other parts of the organism, and seek the judgment of the intuitive healer who is able to explain the process that is going on. To discern the meaning of such a process is at once to be greatly relieved. It is false opinions, fears, and threatening emotions that play havoc with these passing and relatively insignificant inner states. Doubtless, many a person has been carried down to death by the whirlwind of excitement which sometimes springs out of these misinterpreted sensations. On the other hand, fear and pain, emotional excitement, and the rest, when understood, are seen to be nature's warnings which

calmness of insight will enable the mind to profit by.

The extent to which it is profitable to concentrate the attention on different parts of the body, and picture the various functions in perfect working order, depends entirely upon circumstances. In thus journeying in thought through the body one should always begin by clinging fast to the ideal, by renewing the consciousness of spiritual power. One should be careful not to become involved in, not to work upon, the painful sensation. To become absorbed in sensation is simply to increase it. The desideratum is to transcend sensation and contemplate the ideal.

Again, the extent to which it is advisable to make affirmations that are not yet true will probably be determined by the individual. Some people have found it helpful to declare, for example, "I rule the body." Very many others are entirely unable to make such an assertion. For, obviously, the crucial question is, To what extent do I now rule the body? Wherein is my self-control weak? How far is it wise to tamper with the bodily functions? Clearly, one must carefully discriminate. This being so, it is a question of specific needs, not of mere generalisations. Hence knowledge of actual facts is of much more value than abstract assertion. The facts well in hand, one may proceed with the given problems. It is doubtful, then, if much permanent good springs out of the mere "claiming" of perfection. Genuine understanding in regard to the truth

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of one's life should precede the affirmation of specific ideals.

Mental therapists who have devised detailed affirmations and realisations for specific diseases have usually proceeded on the assumptions, first, that there is an exact correspondence between mental causes and physical diseases; and, second, that similar cases can be treated alike. The theory of exact correspondences seems plausible. But, as matter of fact, the temperamental conditions are of much more consequence than the psycho-physical correspondences. Inasmuch as no two individuals are alike, no two can be mentally treated in precisely the same way. The intuition of the spiritual healer discovers surprising differences from time to time, even in the same individual. To follow a formal method of affirmation and denial would be, for the most part, to miss the mark.

We have seen that the cardinal consideration is not affirmation but understanding. To affirm wisely, to employ intelligent ideal suggestions, one must first know the case in hand. A patient might, for example, be suffering from weakness of the heart. To proceed according to rule to treat the patient for vigorous action of the heart might be to proceed in an entirely wrong way; for if the condition sprang from a delicate little nervous tension, in a finely organised inner life, it might call for the most gentle, soothing treatment. But when such a tension has been removed the treatment might well be of the more vigorous type.

Again, the treatment must needs be varied according to the stage that has been reached in the process of cure. Sometimes the history of the case is read backward, as it were, in successive treatments. First, the later and more superficial conditions are overcome, their causes explained, their lessons learned. Then step by step the work proceeds until childhood is reached, even prenatal conditions and events. The more acute the intuition of the healer the more is the treatment likely to vary, until finally the soul is declared "free."

In the use of arguments, affirmations, and other verbal realisations, it is important to remember that the words are formal, secondary; it is the spirit that gives life. The definite words enable the mind of the healer to take on a fixed direction. The direction once attained, it is often better to let the intellectual activity cease, and quietly maintain the fixed attitude of mind. It is not always necessary to give specific attention to the problem in hand, if this attitude is particularly strong. Some of the most successful healing has been done by attaining and holding such an attitude, with little thought of the patient, so far as specific difficulties were concerned.

Another reason for pointing out that there is a higher principle than affirmation is found in the tendency of the novice to "work" too hard, to exert the will. To fall into this habit is to forget that the therapeutic work is not an affair of the human self alone, that the will is not a separate power to be exerted, but rather an activity that is

directed by a change of attention. To adopt an aspiring attitude, to direct the attention to the central source of life, is to realise that at best the personal self is merely an instrument. In fact, one sometimes feels that whatever power is effective is "given" from above on the occasion of urgent need. In such cases the human part consists in keeping the consciousness directed aright. It is not for the healer to dictate what shall be done.

The principle of "absent treatment" is the same as that of the silent treatment when the patient is present. Conscientious healers are not likely to give such treatment to persons whom they have not seen, although sometimes it is possible to establish communication by means of a letter. The treatment is, of course, given at an appointed hour, and it lasts the usual length of time, that is, about fifteen or twenty minutes. When a person has received present treatment from a healer, it is ordinarily not difficult to establish communication at a distance. The healer recognises the patient by discovery of the mental atmosphere, already known through previous sittings when the patient was present. Oftentimes absent healing is very effective,—occasionally more successful than present treatment.

In all cases of acute suffering, whether the patient be absent or present, the first need is immediate relief from pain. Such relief is soonest brought by the aid of thoughts, realisations, and mental pictures which are suggestive of peace, together with

realisations that tend to allay fear, quiet the emotions, and remove the nervous tension. Here again, the realisation is instrumental rather than final; the essential is the establishment of the calmest kind of attitude on the healer's part, together with such positive directing of the healing power as the case may demand.

The chronic invalid is not, as a rule, treated for relief from pain, but for restoration to health, and such work is naturally systematic and educational, according to the method that is most likely to succeed in the long run. To cure a "polite invalid," it is usually necessary to employ the most persuasive arguments in order to overcome habits of long standing. Sometimes it is a plain case of selfishness,<sup>1</sup> but not, therefore, a case where condemnation is in order, for the patient is not likely to understand the connection between daily habit and health. Again, the first point to be won may be to find some occupation for the patient who has too much time upon her hands. It is always a splendid sign of change for the better when the invalid, formerly absorbed in her own sensations, begins to wonder how she can help other people to knowledge of the truth which has set her free.

It is seldom that a physician's diagnosis is of service, for in most cases the physicians have already done their best, and what is now needed is interior discernment of interior conditions. Nevertheless, there is no reason in these days, now that the silent

<sup>1</sup> See *The Divine Law of Cure*, p. 243.



and intuitive methods are well established, why physician and spiritual therapist should not, when necessary, work in entire harmony. Ordinarily, the physician places stress on an entirely different set of conditions, hence it matters much what the type of disease is. To the spiritual therapist it is not primarily important whether the disease be organic, nervous, "mental," or what not; the question is, Is the patient ready, pliable, willing to co-operate? It is no doubt easier to illustrate the methods of spiritual healing by reference to nervous troubles, but it by no means follows that such diseases are easiest to cure. The methods have been as successfully applied to organic as to nervous diseases. The therapeutic pioneers were themselves cured of serious organic diseases before their public work with the sick began. To them as to their followers a problem of health was a problem of a given individual. The given individual lived a certain mode of life. There had been past experiences leading up to the present illness. Hence it was necessary to make a special study of the given case. If both inner and outer conditions could be changed, the person could be cured. This often-times meant a radical departure from the accustomed modes of thought and life, possibly a change in the disposition.

With all these possibilities of radical change in view, it is not strange that when the patient begins to understand the significance of the spiritual method he sees that it is much more comprehensive

in scope than the mere healing of disease would seem to imply. Frequently a patient desires the treatment to continue for the sake of "the spiritual benefit" that accrues. Thus the therapeutic interest gives place to the religious and the educational ideal. A time ensues when the patient clearly sees that self-help must complete what the healer's work has begun. Thus the therapeutic philosophy enlarges into a general theory of life.

This leads us, finally, to the highest ideal of therapeutic practice, namely, the inspiring thought that the healing experience at its best is part of the great process of spiritual creation. It is well to emphasise this ideal, for in this chapter we have been dwelling for the most part on psychological and secondary considerations. It is time to return to the confession of Chapter VIII. that, after all, the healing process is a wonderful manifestation of power and life in which man is only a participant. To emphasise the human conditions, to dwell on affirmations, realisations, varying methods, and the like, is to forget that in the last analysis there is but one principle, and that is spiritual. From the most interior point of view, the patient, whoever he may be, whatever his problem, is a soul in process of advancement from a lower to a higher condition. The specific trouble is an external incident. The primary consideration is the degree of advancement into spiritual knowledge and power thus far attained.

It is a cardinal point in the doctrine which we are setting forth that the soul "attracts" conditions—

mental, social, and physical—corresponding to the stage of development in the inner sense of the word. This has sometimes been supposed to mean “the thoughts which man is holding.” But in the preceding chapters we have been discovering something deeper than this, namely, that man presents a certain front towards the world, maintains a certain attitude. The thoughts he “holds” spring from and are characterised by this “prevailing love,” as Swedenborg calls it. To reform the thoughts it is necessary to “restore the soul.” Thus the true therapist is the soul’s physician. To aid the soul to come to judgment, see precisely what stage has been reached, is to play a far greater part than merely to aid the ordinary processes of natural healing. At best, the healer is merely an elder brother. He can neither make the change in attitude for the patient nor compel the change to come. He can offer alternatives and then let the soul choose. Nor can he regulate the comings and goings of the Spirit. The Spirit still “bloweth where it listeth.” Among a given number of silent sittings by the patient there will be one or more which will stand out above the rest. On those rare occasions a consciousness will be present which will lead the healer to insist, “Not unto us, not unto us.” For he will recognise that all his therapeutic devices are mean accessories when compared with this, the real presence, the creative life of the Spirit. To try to control that Spirit would be like assuming to regulate the universe. For the moment the veils of

mystery have largely been drawn aside and the adoring observer is permitted to see in very truth that "the Father worketh hitherto and I work." Fortunate are they who in some measure have had this glimpse into the real life of the soul. Fortunate, too, are they who take their clue from this central experience and endeavour to adjust their whole attitude in accordance with it. Healer and patient advance together when such moments of uplifting come. For the time they are filled with the divine influx. The sweet peace of the Spirit descends upon them. The tender love of the Father fills their hearts. A sense of newness thrills their being, and out of this immediate relationship with the primal Heart of life they go forth as if born anew.

## CHAPTER X

### SUMMARY AND DEFINITION

**I**T is plain that to take the theory of spiritual healing seriously one must first apply it in actual practice, either with the sick or in self-help. It is not a doctrine to be theoretically accepted or rejected. It contains tenets which can only be tested experimentally. The experiences of no two people are alike. Hence in the end each man develops his own methods and states the doctrine according to the considerations which his own work has emphasised. Nevertheless, clearness of thinking is highly important. Method and conclusions will alike depend upon one's understanding of the elementary propositions. While, then, the two preceding chapters contain the teachings vitally most important for those who are seeking health by the inner method, it is worth while to try to differentiate a little more sharply the specific type of therapeutic doctrine for which this volume pleads.

I. Two main interests run through the teachings which we have considered in their historical development. The first is love of truth. There is earnest desire not only to know the truth in regard to the production and cure of disease, but to understand

man's entire condition in life, that he may be free. Hence great value is attached to facts, not the alleged facts of opinions and beliefs, not the superficial facts in regard to physical effects, but the profound facts of mental and spiritual causes. Great stress is, therefore, put upon mental atmospheres, subconscious reactions, and mental attitudes. It is claimed that when one penetrates behind all that is usually known as the disease, the entire situation is put in a different light. For one then discovers the decisive little reactions whose results so greatly influence the external life. To understand and to regulate these dynamic attitudes is, indeed, to make the explanation which is "the cure."

The second leading interest is religious. The conclusion that, by taking thought for his health, man may also learn to draw upon higher resources, readily leads to the more important conclusion that every man is directly related to "the omnipresent Wisdom" in a very practical sense. Thus it was that the new theory of health became for Mr. Quimby and his followers a new religion, or at least a more practical religion, so that they no longer cared for the theology of the day. The connecting link between these two main interests was the inspiring belief in the higher nature of man, which served both as an instrument in conquering disease and as a means of entering into communion with God.

This may seem to be a confusion of interests, and the reader may be inclined to object that the healing

of disease should be kept distinct from religion. In fact, interested students have sometimes asked if it be not possible to state the therapeutic doctrine without entangling it with religion. This might be done were it a question of merely mental healing; for, as we have seen, there is a common basis in the phenomena of suggestion and the resident restorative power of nature on which all mental therapeutic systems may unite. But as matter of fact the actual practice of spiritual healing has from the first been inseparable from religion. If we are to understand either the earlier or the later forms of this therapeutic doctrine we must constantly bear this fact in mind.

Fully one-half of Mr. Quimby's manuscripts abound in references to religious problems and to the Bible. The reason is not far to seek. Mr. Quimby found that the fears, emotions, and beliefs which were factors in producing the patient's disease were intimately connected with religious creeds and experiences. He sometimes traced a nervous disorder to the emotional excitement attendant upon religious conversion. To explain the genesis of the disease also meant to explain the effect of religious emotion upon health, and to indicate a wiser way of becoming religious. The close connection between health and religion in such cases led Mr. Quimby to investigate the subject more and more. The result was, for Mr. Quimby and for many of his patients, new light upon the cures wrought by Jesus, and hence new conclusions in regard to the

mission of Jesus, the nature of sin, and the significance of the atonement.

Thus it became clear that the truth which shall "set man free" must explain both disease and sin. It was no less plain that the method of cure must apply both to the problems of disease and to the problems of sin. In a word, to set man free is to bring him to consciousness of what he is as a son of God. Both sin and disease are ultimately due to ignorance. The true cure is wisdom. This wisdom relates not alone to man's fleshly life, but to the life within, to his spiritual existence. If man really learns to draw upon "the omnipresent Wisdom" he will be able to conquer himself in all respects. The same power that overcomes disease is applicable to the effects of sin.

Thus the doctrine which began in a rather trivial assertion, namely, that "disease is an error, the only remedy for which is truth," gradually became a theory of the entire conduct of man and led to a practical religious life. Any one who is to-day mystified by the close relationship between the mind-cure theory and religion should turn back to the early history of the subject and try to enter imaginatively into the lives of the mental-healing pioneers. By tracing the historical development of the doctrine, they will also discover why some of the later mind-curers spend so much energy criticising "the old theology."

One of the pioneers already referred to was told by Mr. Quimby that his Calvinism was killing him.



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This meant, of course, that there was a close connection between the religious ardour and the nervous disease. It was natural that when the situation was once understood there was a violent reaction against Calvinism and with it everything that pertained to the organised religion of the time. Yet that same patient was of a deeply religious nature, and the religious need had to be met. It was no less natural, then, that the inculcation and practice of Mr. Quimby's ideas should take the place, in calmer fashion, of the sometime Calvinistic enthusiasm.

What, then, was inseparable for the pioneers we must not sunder, even for purposes of scientific inquiry. The science *is* the religion. The power to heal disease, either in oneself or in another, is the ultimate practical test of "the truth" in question. Hence it is that one must "live the life" to know the law. The science is not to be either proved or disproved by argument. The religion is not made genuine by the mere acceptance of the creed. Each man must test the faith to the full by carrying it into practice, not only for the sake of regaining or maintaining health, but in business and social life, in the service of humanity, and in the solitary struggles of the soul.

However far the extreme and superficial devotees of the doctrine may have wandered from the more rational and profound teaching, however much one may differ from Mr. Quimby, this is the soundest and most enduring phase of the entire movement. There has been a persistent attempt to "live the

life," to make Christianity practical in minutest degree, to make it as practical in one's modest way as Jesus made it in his. If the result has been that people have lost interest in the churches and have turned to mind-cure books for spiritual satisfaction, there is but one course to pursue—to be as concretely practical as the mind-cure people; to do well what they have done so crudely. At any rate, when people work earnestly to spread knowledge of "the Christ within" it is not for us to condemn. That the healing experience has been the means of awakening genuine interest in religion is by no means to be denied.

Hence the spiritual-healing movement at its best takes its place among the new evidences of our time in the empirical sources of religion. Every one is advised to enter the holy of holies for himself, put himself in direct relationship with the higher order of being. For it is, first of all, the immediate experience that is real. In the ineffable moment of divine communion the soul knows reality by possessing it. There is no barrier between. Each soul must possess the reality in order to test the genuineness of the faiths that are reared upon it. The thought, the interpretation, is secondary. The common basis of manifold interpretations is within the reach of all.

2. In the light of the more valuable results of spiritual therapeutics, we may now venture to make a brief summary of the fundamental postulates of the general theory.

The fundamental consideration is the ever-present existence of God, the supreme Wisdom, of whose nature and whose purposes the entire universe is a manifestation. God is regarded in an intimate sense as the Father, who has provided for the needs of all His children. The Father is also regarded as the giver of all life, so that man is the recipient of life, in every sense dependent. But the dependence is essentially that of constant relationship such that wisdom and power are ever ready; there is guidance for each moment, love for every need. In the fullness of His love God has given man opportunity to have experience. But He has been no less careful to provide for all the stages of man's long evolution into conscious sonship. Hence the immanent Presence bears relation even to man's illnesses,—that Presence is an ever-ready resource in times of trouble. Hence the great need on man's part is recognition of the divine guidance and purpose, co-operation with the divine power.

The second consideration is the essential character of man's life. Primarily, man is a soul, a child of God, dwelling in the eternal world. His inmost life is continuous in that world, so that even death is an external incident. The real nature and intent of his life is spiritual. He possesses spiritual powers which function independently of matter, and enable him to transcend conditions of space and time. Hence, to know himself, man must adjust his thought to the proportions of the spiritual universe. He must cease to regard himself as a mere being of

flesh and blood, and consider what it means to be a denizen of a higher order of being. But he should also take into account the mental, social, and physical conditions of life, and thus see the meaning of the various relationships which constitute his life at large. The central point of view should always be the spiritual—the standpoint of the inner or invisible world—but the spiritual ideal is to be understood in the universal sense.

The next consideration of importance is the character of our ordinary life. Consciousness is fundamental. The natural world is made known to us through mental experience by means of sensation, activity, and thought. Of great consequence in our mental life are our interpretations of sensation, our opinions and beliefs, the subtle influences of social life, the subconscious after-effects of our habitual and decisive attitudes. For we react upon the world in accordance with our beliefs concerning it, our entire mental equipment. Hence the world is large or small to us according to the character of our mental life. This does not take from the reality of the natural world, with its systems, forces, qualities, and meanings. But what nature is for us depends upon the degree of intelligence we have attained. Having discovered the power of our beliefs we are, of course, at liberty to expand our thought to the proportions of modern science and idealistic philosophy.

Closely connected with these basic considerations is the fact that all life, whether natural, mental, or

spiritual, is an evolution. "Man is a progressive being." All life is purposive. The essential is consciousness of the progressive activity of life and our position in relation to it. Since life is ultimately spiritual, the real meaning of our long evolution is spiritual. Born in ignorance of what we are, and erroneously mistaking the body for the real man, we have been the victims of our own ignorance, the originators of our trouble. But there are compensations in the woes thus caused. It is within our power not only to overcome the ills of the flesh and the mind, but to enter into conscious co-operation with the Power that moves through all evolution.

It follows that life is, through and through, *one*. These are not two powers: the one good, the other evil, at war with each other. Disease is not an affliction sent upon mankind. Sin is not due to a "fall," or to the machinations of an evil spirit. The whole drama takes place within ourselves, so far as heaven and hell are concerned. Action and reaction are equal. As we reap we sow. The struggle of life is due to our own ignorance, and to the misuse of powers inherently good. To be set free by spiritual truth is to see that life springs from a single Source, that it becomes one and harmonious for us when we enter into adjustment with the guidances of the omnipresent Wisdom. The clue to this adjustment is the Christ spirit, the ideal which the life of Jesus exemplified. Every one has the possibility of thus entering into oneness with God. Since all activity and all consciousness centre about

the soul, all readjustment takes place within, all reform begins at home. To win the truth that brings freedom is to be guided to adopt the right attitude towards the activities of daily life. Very much, therefore, depends upon the heart, the will, the attitude. If we would conquer and uplift the flesh we must begin by learning how we have helped to make ourselves what we are. We must, first of all, enter into life in a hopeful spirit, expectant of the good, the sound, and the sane.

Whatever reality our ills and woes may have in the physical portion of our life, those ills and woes are made known to us within. Much depends upon our first attitude of approach, our initial beliefs, emotions, and fears. It is within our power so to understand how we have created our ills as to be able to become entire masters where we were once slaves. To explain, to understand, is to that extent to be free. It remains to put in practice what we have thus learned.

To be deeply stirred by the experience of spiritual healing is to see that one has been put into a situation that demands entire readjustment in thought and action. Now, it would be absurd to claim that the idealistic philosophy involved in such an experience is new. Those who have been reared in a liberal religious faith, of course, have a less marked religious experience. The same old world is here; one believes in the same religious objects; one loves the same friends. But everything is put into a new light by the discovery that one can take all these

interests home in the inner life and gain possession of oneself in such a practical way that religion and philosophy are made concrete as never before.

With the old habit of thought and life an entirely different set of expectations is associated. It has been supposed that one must pass through a round of children's diseases, maladies of earlier and later life, culminating in the loss of faculties and in death, with whatever terrors it may have in store. One must take one's disposition practically as it stands, with all its passions and its discords. One must make sure of salvation. When ill one must call a physician, and so on through a long round. Of course, the conditions of life have largely changed since Mr. Quimby's day, but for modern devotees of mental healing there is a no less striking reaction.

The first tendency of mental-healing devotees is to react rather violently from everything that has previously held them in bondage. Usually they cannot find language strong enough to express their dislike of medical practice and the "old theology." But allowing for all their excesses—and given time, they begin to regain their equilibrium in acceptable fashion—there is profound meaning in their reaction. For when they become calm enough to look about they see that for them the world has changed. What before was a mere object of religious belief now becomes a reality. Instead of yielding to fear and emotional excitement, when pain arises, they become calm and draw upon the resources of the spirit. They expect and look for

the good. They believe that health is natural. They hold that what is ordinarily called the "disposition" is relatively objective, while the soul has powers over all the habits of life and can conquer the passions. A new set of expectations for their friends displaces the old fears and doubts. New possibilities of education are discovered, and greater powers of individual attainment. In a sense none of the "new" ideals is really new, but the one who holds them now knows how to begin to realise them. Thus "realisation" is the keynote.

The novelty consists, then, in the possession of a concrete, practical method such that each man is put upon his own resources. Fundamental in all this is the optimistic conception of the soul, namely, that there is a part of us that is never ill, that never sins. If health is natural, in the ultimate sense, then goodness is too—so one argues. It is as morbid and absurd to dwell on the fact of sin in the world as to rehearse the symptoms of disease. Assure a man that in his heart of hearts he is a child of God, and the soul within him becomes "erect." It is not condemnation, but help, that people need. They know enough about sin and suffering already. What they are eager to know is, what to do in order to live a better and healthier life. This method applies as well to the sin-sick soul as to the bed-ridden invalid. Both the sinner and the invalid need help from others at the outset. But eventually they must be taught to be self-helpful in the profoundest sense of the word. This



instruction the new therapists claim to be able to give.

Of course, one must make allowances for many extravagances and crudities. Some of the elementary statements are absurd and superficial. But, extravagant or not, these declarations of faith stand for an underlying interest of real worth. To one who has been in bonds it is a great thing to be free. To those who have been practically materialists, whatever their protestations, it is everything to discover the Spirit. However superficial the initiatory belief in the power of mind, the essential is to be in possession of a live clue. Even the assertion that "disease is a belief" serves its purpose as a working hypothesis. If one will but investigate, it matters little where one begins. Mr. Quimby's beginning was crude, but his eager desire for truth led him to a point where such elementary pioneer work was no longer necessary.

3. In order to put the teachings of Mr. Quimby and his followers into sharper relief we may now venture to make a few definitions and draw a number of comparisons. In the first place, disease may be defined, from the mental point of view, as disturbed action. This definition involves no denial of the physiological conditions of disease. It by no means resolves disease into a mere "error." The point is that, whatever the physical disability, the disease is mentally known as disturbed equilibrium. This mental disturbance is met by a certain attitude, according to the belief that is held concerning

it. If the belief merely stands for conventional fears and ignorance, the mind becomes its slave. If the direction of mind with which the threatening state is met is calm, strong, and confident, the result varies accordingly. Hence, while very much depends upon the thought or belief, it is not the thought that is of chief moment, but *the mode of action* which is attendant upon it. This is a crucial point that has been almost invariably overlooked by mind-cure devotees.

Health, mentally defined, is harmonious adjustment of the inner life in its relation with the body. It is founded upon self-knowledge, self-control, moderation, poise, and equanimity. It is not established by affirmation, but through understanding. It is the natural state of man and may become the permanent possession of the wise.

Restoration to health takes place by one principle only, and is dependent, so far as the inner life is concerned, upon the discovery of the hidden causes which mentally brought on the disease. To explain the restoration one must be able not only to tell how mental influence played its part in the creation of disease, but make plain the relationships of the human mind, describe the superior faculties of the soul, and characterise the relationship of God and man.

The human mind is a theatre of influences of the greatest complexity and variety, partly subconscious and organic, partly social and spiritual. It possesses certain habitual dispositions, or "direc-

tions," which are accompanied by multiform hidden activities. To become aware of these psychical dispositions is to be able to explain the power of fear, belief, haunting mental pictures, and the like, in the phenomena of disease.

4. *Relation to Psychology.*—Obviously, this theory of mental life is in sharp contrast with present-day physiological psychology. The contention of contemporary psychology—that there is a parallelism between mind and body—is not denied, but it is maintained that there is a superior activity which can bring about changes in the body, contrary to the expectations of all who judge merely by physical symptoms. This is a purely empirical belief, the result of actual practice with the sick; whereas current psychology is simply one of the natural sciences, concerned with the facts and laws of mental life as found in close relation with the body. That is to say, psychology is now a descriptive science, with certain limited interests; it is not a science of practical values, worths, and ideals. Nevertheless, the time may come when the methods of experimental psychology will be successfully applied to mental healing phenomena.

*Relation to Hypnotism.*—Hypnotism is the inducing of sleep for purposes of scientific experiment, medical practice, or suggestive therapeutics. The principle of hypnotic after-effects is suggestion. In this respect there is a slight connection with the phenomena, but not with the methods, of mental healing. Hypnotism may be practised for inferior

reasons, or for the sake of controlling another's mind. Spiritual healing, on the other hand, like any deed of service or love, is inspired by deep desire to help a person in need. It is not dependent on, although it may use, suggestion. There is no hypnosis or sleep, no attempt to control another's mind, or to convey merely personal desires, wishes, or emotional states. Experience shows that the spiritual healer transcends the plane of merely personal sentiments, and is prompted by a religious rather than by a scientific or merely therapeutic motive.

*Relation to Faith Cure.*—Cures by faith are usually wrought by naïve religious belief, or through superstitious credulity in a sacred relic or something of the sort. The healing power is invoked by those who still believe in mysterious providences, divine dispensations, and other miraculous events. If a cure results from such invocations the former sufferer is no wiser. Spiritual healing is educational, and is based on intimate acquaintance with higher laws. The relation of faith to this process is explained by Dr. Evans, *The Divine Law of Cure*, Part II., chapter vii.

*Relation to "Christian Science."*—The term "Christian Science" was used, in an entirely different connection, in a poem by Abram Cowles, published about 1840. Among the works of Rev. Wm. Adams, there is a work entitled *Elements of Christian Science*, Philadelphia, 1850. A German scholar, Dr. Deletsche, has also used the term. Mr. Quimby

used the term to signify the exact principles implied in the life and teachings of Jesus, and also exemplified in his own work among the sick. Mrs. Eddy may or may not have heard him use the term. But at any rate she acquired from him the general principles and practical methods which made her own writing and teaching possible.

Aside from the points of divergence already indicated, the teaching known as "Christian Science" is based upon claims in regard to an alleged "revelation," an authorised text-book, a recognised leader, and certain denials regarding the existence of the natural world. As opposed to the unethical statement, "All is good; there is no evil," Mr. Quimby's followers point out what they call "the wisdom of the situation," and they account for the existence of evil by reference to the conditions of man's natural ignorance. "Christian Science" urges people to "demonstrate over" and ignore, even when it is a question of life and death; the doctrine we have been considering aids man to come to consciousness of the point he has actually attained in mental and spiritual evolution.

*Relation to "Mental Science."*—This term was used, for a time after 1880, to designate all mind-cure doctrines other than "Christian Science." From Boston the term was carried to Hartford, Connecticut, where some, who later became healers in New York, were taught by a former pupil of Mrs. Eddy. The *Mental Healing Monthly* was established in Boston, and the *Mental Science Magazine* in Chi-

ago, to represent this teaching; and a general convention was held in Boston. In those days the term was used even by followers of Quimby and Evans. Later, the term was revived by a different type of mind-cure people, hence it became identified with a radically individualistic, commercial doctrine, in the South and West, and is no longer applicable to the Quimby theory.

*Relation to "Metaphysical Healing."*—This term, which for a time took the place of "Mental Science," has usually been employed to designate any mind-cure theory founded on mental principles, and sometimes with reference to belief in "mental pictures" as the "causes" of disease. The term "metaphysics" is always used in a practical sense. The theory of "mental pictures" is a late development of a principle which Mr. Quimby very early recognised.

With some teachers of mental healing the first procedure is to inquire into the patient's past life to learn what haunting "mental picture" is the cause. Here is an instance which seems to confirm this theory of disease: A mental therapist once received as a patient a young woman who had been an invalid for a number of years and who was suffering from nervous convulsions, during the more violent of which she became unconscious. One of the severer attacks came on during the first sitting with the healer. Inquiry brought out the fact that these attacks had been thus severe ever since the sufferer had been frightened by the sudden and threatening approach of a pair of runaway horses. Thereupon

the healer proceeded to "blot out" the mental picture of these horses. But there seemed to be a deeper cause. This was found to be the unexpected discharge of a cannon which frightened the patient when a child. Once more the picture was blotted out, and ultimately the convulsions ceased. In such a case the process of therapeutic thought pursued is intended to establish the right retrospective relation to the accidents which occasioned the disease. The regular physician would say that the physical shock was the cause. The mental picture would be regarded as inconsequential. If the mental therapist invariably cured by blotting out mental pictures, the evidence would be strongly in favour of this theory. But the results show that the theory is inadequate. On the whole, however, this theory is a valuable development of the general doctrine.

*Relation to the "New Thought."*—This is the latest of mind-cure terms and at present the most popular. It came into vogue in 1895, and was used as the title of a little magazine published for a time in Melrose, Massachusetts. The term was apparently a convenient designation, inasmuch as for its devotees it was literally a "new thought" about life. But critics soon assailed it on the ground that the doctrine was not new, and in England the term "Higher Thought" was substituted. Like "Mental Science," the term once had a nobler significance, but has often been identified with the most commercial, extravagant, and individualistic tendencies

in the mind-cure world. It now means any kind of mind-cure theory, from the most mystical pantheism to the sort of individualism that can not even be harmoniously organised for purposes of a general convention.

The "New Thought" at its best developed directly out of the teachings we have been considering, notably from the works of Dr. Evans, to whom Henry Wood and other recent writers have been greatly indebted. Of late there have been admixtures of "Christian Science" and other elements, differing more radically from the parent teaching in respects where that teaching had the advantage.

For example, one is inclined to doubt whether, in the long run, it is so profitable to rear a structure of denials and abstract affirmations as to come to judgment according to the method on which Mr. Quimby laid such stress. For, after a time, the mind comes to believe the "facts" it has created by suggestion, hence to lose touch with actual facts, if not with real truth. Facts should never frighten us, and there are occasions when the facts of physical existence are as instructive as the truths of mental influence. It implies no "compromise with materialism" to admit and to learn from the conditions of our natural life. God is the author of nature, and its laws were well established when man came on the scene. To all those who "build their own world from within" Mr. Quimby would have said: It is not your opinion about the world that is



of consequence, but the actual truth of your existence in the world which Wisdom has created.

Again, great stress is often placed upon the power of individual man in such wise as to make man practically equal with God, as if he were an independent source of life and power. Now, Mr. Quimby and his followers point out, agreeing with Swedenborg,<sup>1</sup> that man has no life and power of his own, no good quality apart from God; for God alone is the source of life. To take one's start from this doctrine of "the omnipresent Wisdom" is to develop in a different direction from that taken by those who insist on the supremacy of individual thought. It implies a different attitude, it leads to a different approach to the healing experience, and involves a different manner of thinking about life. This spiritual principle is embodied in the "New Thought," too, but owing to the fluctuations between individualism and socialism, theism and pantheism, the issues are often left entirely in doubt. The result is, that each devotee sets up his own little centre instead of acknowledging the divine principle. Hence it seems important to call attention to the radically different alternatives which cause the "New Thought" to be divided against itself.

*Relation to Science.*—We have seen that Mr. Quimby was interested in the development of "a science of health and happiness." Upon this

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the Swedenborgian theory of spiritual healing, see *Psychiasis: Healing through the Soul*, by Chas. H. Mann. Massachusetts New Church Union, Boston, 1900.

"science" an art of right living was to be founded. It is clear that such a science must be based, first, upon facts, then the orderly exposition of facts in terms of laws and values. Hence it would be a strict carrying out of Mr. Quimby's ideal to apply the painstaking methods of modern scientific investigation. As yet scarcely anything has been accomplished in this direction. The term "science" has been used freely enough by mental therapists, but either with reference to so-called "Christian Science" or its speculative substitute, namely, "the Science of Being," by which is meant an entirely abstract doctrine, built upon artificial premises, *e. g.*, "God is impersonal principle," "God has no power of choice."

Hudson's *Law of Psychic Phenomena* came nearer the scientific ideal, but was equally disappointing in the end. The author had not been a mental therapist, and his hypothesis of the subjective and objective minds was decidedly artificial. The first therapist to work away from the one-sided position of the typical mental healer, and bring to bear the resources of modern psychology, was Charles M. Barrows, whose *Suggestion Instead of Medicine*<sup>1</sup> contains much sound thinking and is still one of the best books on a specific phase of the subject. Mr. Barrows points out, for example, that

"A psychical cure is not a simple but a complex event. The elemental facts are of two kinds, and fall under two

<sup>1</sup> Boston, 1900.

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quite disparate categories. Sickness is a physical experience, and recovery a bodily change. Such treatment, on the contrary, belongs definitively not to the world of matter but to the world of mind." "Pain has a physical cause, and cannot be permanently banished until that cause is removed."<sup>1</sup>

The most thorough investigation that has been made by a scientific scholar was conducted, under the auspices of Clark University, by H. H. Goddard,<sup>2</sup> who gathered many interesting reports from the entire field with the impartiality of one who had nothing to gain or to lose, whatever his conclusions regarding the value of mental healing, faith cure, "Christian Science," and the rest. Dr. D. Hack Tuke's work, *The Influence of the Mind on the Body*, is still a source of information for those who look outside of the mental-healing world for evidence.

Scarcely a writer has even suggested that mental-healing phenomena should be studied with the same thoroughness that is accorded to physical disease. Most of the mental healers have taken up the practice with merely such preparation as a course of treatment afforded, coupled with the teachings of a brief course of lectures and the study of a few books. Strictly speaking, the person who is to practise mental healing should be well educated, thoroughly acquainted with modern psychology and the other special sciences that are likely to be of

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 7, 73.

<sup>2</sup> See the *American Journal of Psychology*, vol. x., 1899.

service. Some would add that there should be knowledge of anatomy and physiology. If one is to be not merely a mental but a spiritual therapist there should be additional training, as well as careful study of the religious and philosophical questions that develop out of the healing experience. A broad philosophical foundation well laid, it would be possible for the healer to enlarge the work far beyond present attainments. For as neither healers nor teachers have been adequately equipped for their task, their work has soon fallen within narrow limits. Hence it is that in the mental-healing world there has been endless repetition of a few ideas.

In order to enlarge the work and provide for constant growth, it is necessary, in the first place, to enlarge the therapeutic theory itself. This can best be accomplished by more thorough study of the facts of mental influences of all kinds, the power of mind over the body, the phenomena of subconscious after-effects and their physiological responses, together with an impartial study of successful and unsuccessful therapeutic practice. The first result would be an enlarged theory of disease, its natural, mental, and spiritual cure; and in the end more intelligence in the mental treatment of disease. The next result would be a greatly enlarged psychology, for, as we have seen, emphasis has been placed upon the power of thought without due recognition of its relationship to activity and the will.

This psychological reconstruction can best be

accomplished by reference to the psychology of Professor James, culminating in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*. The advantages in favour of the psychology of Professor James are briefly these: (1) an adequate basis is provided for the interaction and parallel evolution of mind and body; (2) the instincts, promptings, and volitions of our every-day consciousness are shown to be prior, original, fundamental, while our thoughts, theories, and interpretations are later, secondary; (3) hence man is, psychologically speaking, a reactive being, and is to be judged by his practical attitudes and reactions; (4) the psychological basis of mystical and other religious experience which this analysis provides is one on which all theorists can unite, attaching their own theoretical interpretations; (5) the psychological theory thus leads gradually to a basis of religious belief in the existence of a higher order of being with which the soul may enter into direct relation. The sense of need, of which Professor James speaks, coupled with the consciousness of its fulfilment, the realisation that actual "work" has been accomplished, is the connecting link between general religious experience and the specific application to health for which Quimby, Evans, and their followers have stood. Thus the spiritual-healing people take their place in an intelligible psychological and religious system. With religious devotees of all ages they share the belief that experience stands first in order of reality, while creeds and theories are secondary. With those devotees they say, Enter

the holy of holies if you would know the realities of communion with the divine. But, passing beyond the mere cultivation of "healthy-mindedness," they maintain that one may consciously put oneself into relationship with the higher order of being, and not only experience an upliftment of soul, but actually use and direct the higher power thus found for the immediate relief of human suffering and the conscious building up of a stronger, saner inner life. To approach the spiritual-healing ideal by this road is to seize upon it with new force and inspiration.<sup>1</sup>

While it is the psychology of Professor James that enables one to correct the one-sided mental theory which has grown out of mind-cure beliefs concerning disease, it is philosophical idealism that leads the way to the larger rational reconstruction. For the most part, mental-healing writers, teachers, healers, and devotees are reactionists, specialists, who seldom see around their subject. But the philosophical implications of their saner beliefs are deeply suggestive, and lead directly to new, empirical confirmations of the idealistic conclusions of the great thinkers of the past. Dr. Evans was the first to see this, and his writings still constitute a direct point of transition to technical thought. To be sure, one cannot always agree with Dr. Evans's interpretation of Berkeley and Hegel; the former did

<sup>1</sup> Professor James's psychology is stated in its simplest form in his *Talks to Teachers*. The other points of consequence for our present purposes may be found in his larger *Psychology*, vol. i., and in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

not reduce all reality to that which is "in" the mind, and it would be incorrect to attribute to Hegel the mere thought theory.<sup>1</sup> But the idealism of Dr. Evans does not stand or fall with his interpretations of the philosophers. These interpretations serve rather to exemplify an empirical idealism which rests on the therapeutic experience and on Christian teaching. Dr. Evans skilfully avoids pantheism, while at the same time giving full place to the experience of communion with the divine. Hence his idealism is essentially theistic, very closely resembling the idealism of Berkeley, who forms the best connecting link with the more elaborate and technical idealism of later philosophers.

But it would be possible to insist too much upon the needs of scientific investigation and philosophical reconstruction. The important consideration, after all, is the practical investigation which each man may undertake for himself, if he acquires the art of thinking from the point of view of the inner life. The first essential is the particular point of view. This adopted, at least in tentative fashion, one is in a position to observe the phenomena of the inner life. To become at home within is in due course to raise the question, How much power have I? Must I be a mere observer, or can I, by learning how my present life has come to be, intelligently participate in the production of my own future? Surely, no man will be contented to remain a mere observer. The degree of participation will be likely to depend upon

<sup>1</sup> See *The Divine Law of Cure*, p. 258.

the insistency of the problems to be solved. "They that are well need no physician." It is suffering that compels us to doubt even the most assured results of conventional theories and methods. For those who are ready to investigate in new fields the way is, indeed, open. It remains for the individual to determine how much there is that is sound in the teachings and methods which we have passed in review.



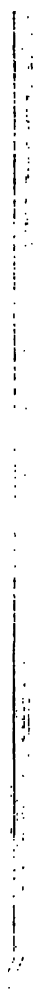


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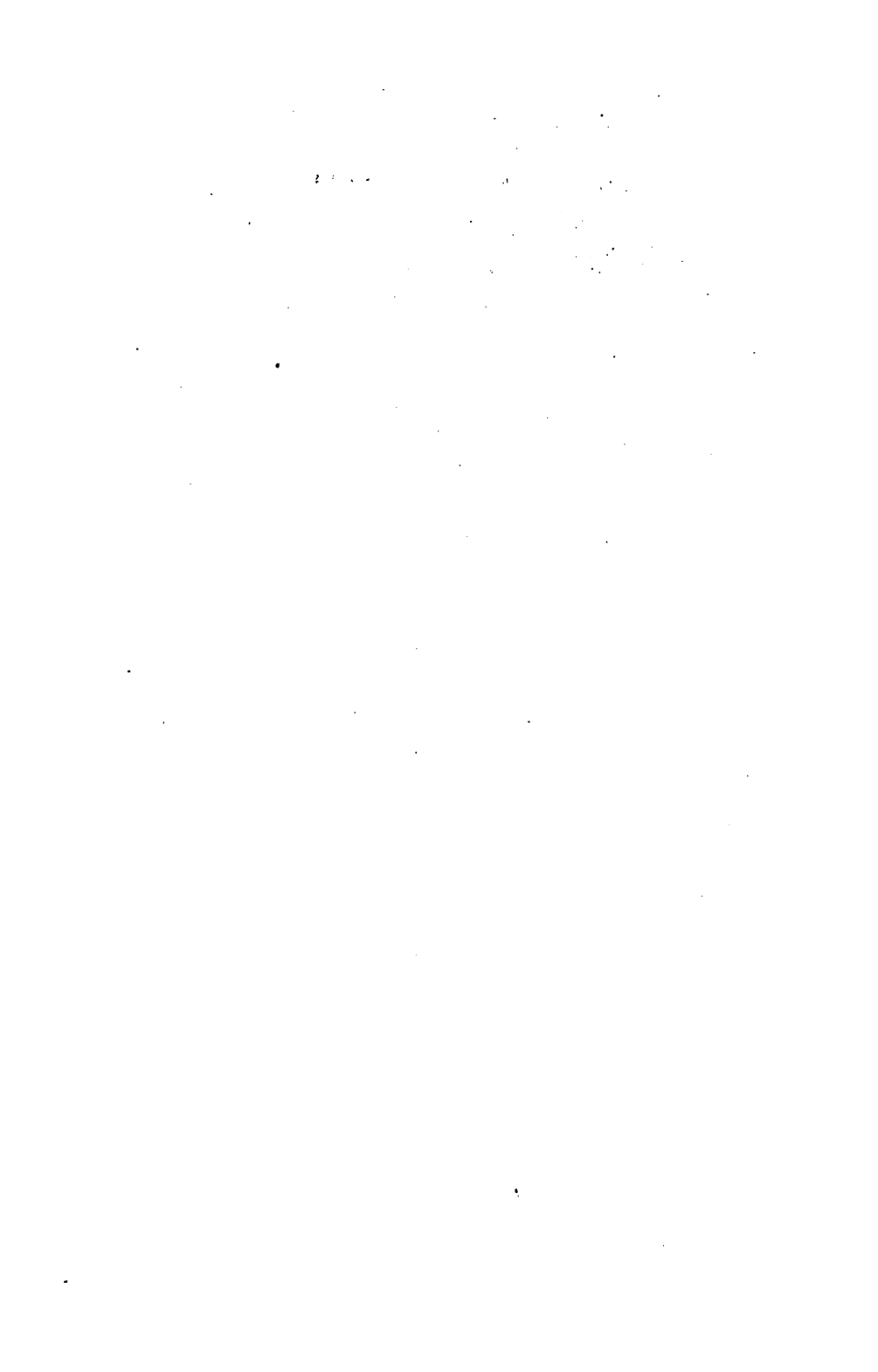
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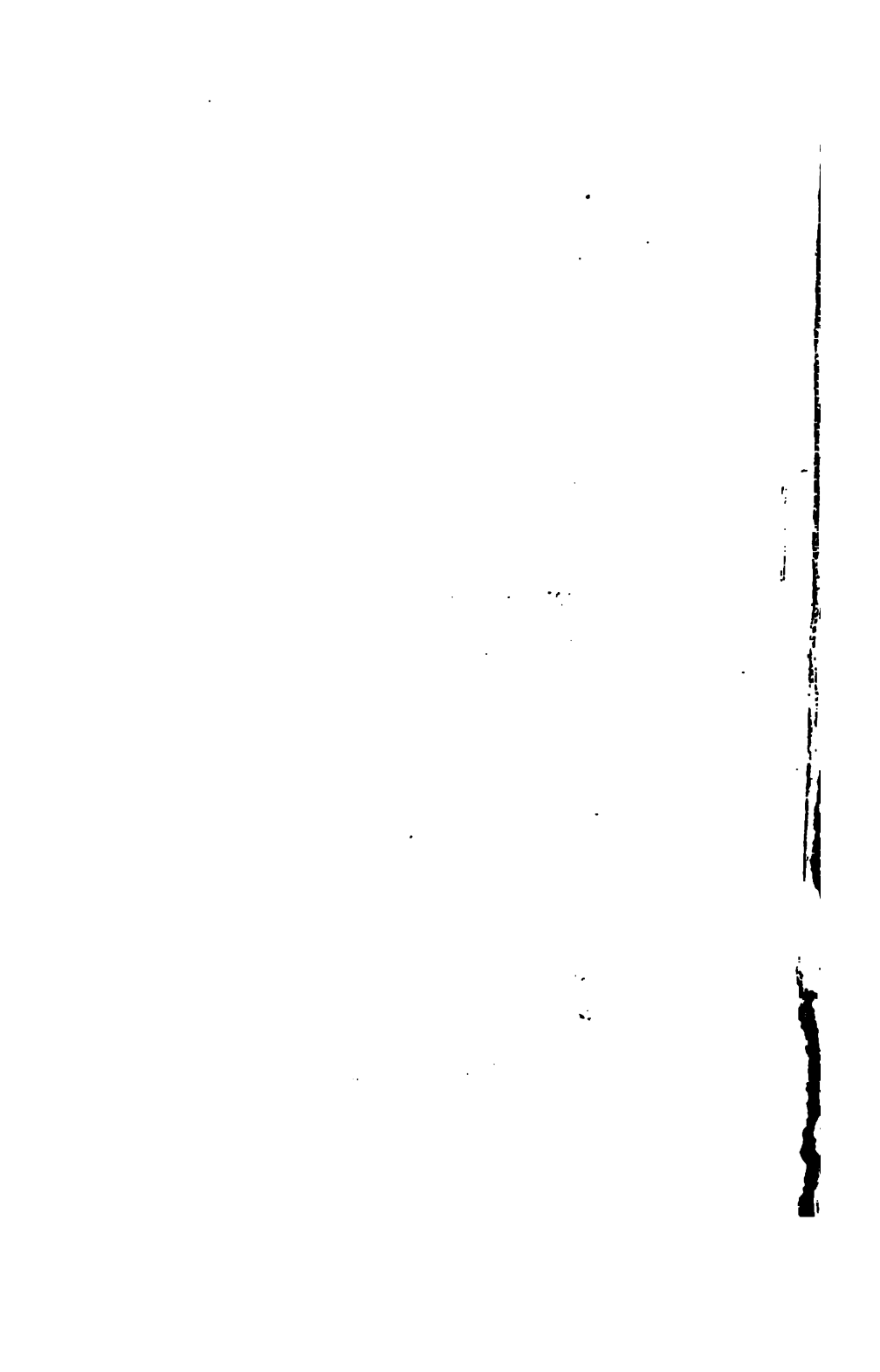
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